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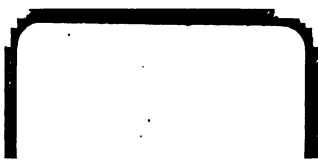
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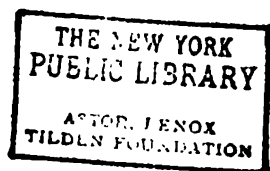
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READY-MONEY MORTIBOY.

A MATTER-OF-FACT STORY.

BY

THE AUTHORS OF "MY LITTLE GIRL," &c., &c.

W. R. R. T.



NEW YORK:
R. WORTHINGTON, 750 BROADWAY.
1879.

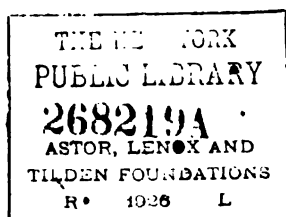
NEW YORK:

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1. *History of the*



GOVERNMENT
CLERK
TRADE

A stamp consisting of three lines of text in a bold, sans-serif font. The text is 'GOVERNMENT', 'CLERK', and 'TRADE'.

READY-MONEY MORTIBOY.

A MATTER-OF-FACT STORY.

CHAPTER I

At Market Basing, in Holmshire, there are five or six good houses that were built, some of them eighty, some of them a hundred, years ago — in a word, before the town was what it is. They stood there when the linendrapers, grocers, and silversmiths lived over their shops in the main streets, and not in pretentious villas of unenduring stucco scattered along the Hunslope road, as they do now. For in those honest days, strange to say, a shopkeeper kept his shop, and wasn't a bit ashamed of it. And these old houses are tenanted now by persons of the same class as those who occupied them when their bricks were new and red. The one by the church is Lawyer Battiscombe's. It was his grandfather's before him. That house a hundred yards nearer the middle of the town is Mr. Francis Melliship's; and a mile in Oxford Street and twenty perches in Market Basing mean about the same thing, for, in these small towns, a house five steps from your door is in an out-of-the-way place it requires an effort to reach. Read the legend in dingy, gilt-relief letters over the door — they were much stared at when first put up, being a novelty from London — MELLISHIP, MORTIBOY, & Co. Melliship's Bank, for there is no Mortiboy in it now. Mortiboy's Bank is at the other end of the street, by the post-office. In many ways, the two banks are wide as the poles apart. At the other end of the town, in Derngate, is another of these old houses. Here lives Mr. Richard Matthew Morti-

boy, by the courtesy of Market Basing — when addressing him in writing — styled esquire, but commonly spoken of as ready-money Mortiboy.

The reason why, I will tell you presently.

The blinds of two of these houses, from garret to kitchen, are drawn down, and the shutters farthest from the door pushed to.

But at the house in Derngate, the shutters next the door on either side are closed, and two mutes, with vulgar faces and silk covered broomsticks, stand on the steps.

Susan Mortiboy is dead, and is about to be buried in St. Giles's Church; and the mutes stand at her brother's door, one on the right hand, and one on the left, arrayed in funeral trappings, bearing the insignia of their order.

Sentinels of honor, to tell us that the Commander-in-Chief, Death, has himself entered the house, and receives the homage of Respectability, his humble servant, in this wise.

Outside, it is cold January frost; inside, in the parlor, are the mourners. They have a good fire, and are as comfortable as decency on such occasions will allow. Ready-money Mortiboy's parlor is a gaunt, cold room, with long, narrow windows, wire blinds, horsehair chairs, a horsehair sofa, red moreen curtains, and a round table with a red cover reaching to the floor. A decanter of sherry and eight glasses are on it. The company assembled have not had any of the sherry, but sit looking at it. If one catches another's eye, the one instantly pretends to be intensely occupied with the ceiling, the pictures, the fire, the

street view, any thing but the sherry. Till, as by a spell, the one's eyes dwell again on the decanter, are caught in the act, and revert with guilty speed to the street view, pictures, fire, ceiling, any thing but the sherry.

Mr. Richard Matthew Mortiboy, the chief mourner, stands with his back to the fireplace. He sighs occasionally with creditable emphasis. He intends his ejaculations to be taken for expressions of grief: they really tell of weariness, and a heart-felt wish that it was all over.

He is sixty-three years old, tall, bald-headed, and of spare frame. His black clothes—he was married in the coat—fit him so tightly, that, until you were very well used to his appearance, your mind would wander into useless speculation as to the ways and means by which he can get into his suits; and, once in, can ever get out again.

But those who know old Ready-money well, have discovered that he is one of those human eels who can wriggle out of any thing they can wriggle into.

Lydia Heathcote, his niece, sits with the Bible open at the Book of Leviticus, looking at her uncle.

She is his next-of-kin, now Susan, his sister, is dead, and old Mortiboy is a millionaire.

Honest John Heathcote, her husband, sits next her. The farmer is the only personage in the company who does not take his eyes off the decanter of wine when he is caught looking at it. He does not think it exactly; but he feels that it is the only pleasant object in the room, and stares straight at it accordingly.

The family lawyer, Benjamin Battiscombe, fills the easy chair.

The family doctor, Mr. Kerby, is expected every minute.

Mr. Hopgood, mayor of Market Basing, and linen-draper, is present in person, out of respect for the family, in his official capacity of undertaker. His face wears an aspect of melancholy solemnity only one shade less deep than he puts on for a county magnate, deceased—undertaken by Hopgood, Son, & Pywell.

George Ghrimes, as Mr. Mortiboy's confidential and managing clerk, and the friend and adviser of Susan Mortiboy, deceased, is present.

And in this goodly company there is one real mourner, Mrs. Heathcote's daughter, Lucy, whose gentle hand smoothed the last pillow of Susan Mortiboy, her aunt.

"Put out to be drunk, I suppose," grunted John Heathcote, with his brown hand on the decanter, to his wife in an

undertone. Then aloud, "Shall I give you a glass of sherry, Lydia?"

Mrs. Heathcote objected, but took it.

The ice thus broken, a glass was filled for everybody but the chief mourner.

Up to this time there was no conversation, but its place was to some extent supplied by the tolling of St. Giles's bass bell.

Bong! — Bong! — Bong! — at intervals of half a minute.

Mr. Mortiboy broke the silence.

"What *are* we waiting for?" he asked, with the impatience of weariness.

"We are waiting for Mr. Francis Melliship and Mr. Kerby," said the mayor.

"Oh-h-h!" sighed the chief mourner, with a look of resignation.

"Francis Melliship all over — eh, Uncle Richard?" said Mrs. Heathcote, feeling her way. "He always is behind at every thing. I have often heard my poor mother say, that, when you married his sister Emily, he kept you all waiting a quarter of an hour before he came to church to give her away. Ha! ha! ha!" — quickly suppressed: it was a funeral.

But her uncle looked angry at this mention of his marriage to Miss Melliship; and Lydia Heathcote saw her mistake before he growled out in reply, —

"Mr. Melliship's cavalier proceedings in private life have not come under my notice for years."

"How long is it since he has been in your house?" asked John Heathcote bluntly.

"A dozen years, I suppose," said Lydia.

"I'll tell you," said Mr. Mortiboy. "He hasn't been here since my poor wife was buried — sixteen years ago last April."

Omnes. "Ah!"

Lucy Heathcote. Poor dear aunt — I remember her very well, though I was but a little child. She always brought something over to Hunslope for Grace and me whenever she came to see us. I recollect her little boxes of sweets, and I have got two of her dolls now. Poor Aunt Emily!

Mrs. Heathcote. "Ah, poor thing!"

Mr. Mortiboy. "She was like all the Melliships since the days of Methuselah, — always giving something to somebody that was none the better for being made a fool of, Lu, my girl."

In this particular way Lucy's grand-uncle Mortiboy had never made a fool of his niece.

"We are all older since then," said John Heathcote, who was a slow thinker.

"Mr. Melliship affronted me in a way I shall never forget, though I hope I have forgiven him," said Mr. Mortiboy. He was

one of that numerous class of homuncules that think ill, yet speak well.

"Why not be friends, then? I like to see a family all friendly, for my part."

"That is a worthy sentiment, sir," said the lawyer. It was the first opportunity he had had of creeping into the conversation.

"Nobody would ever quarrel with you, John," said his wife half reproachfully.

"And I quarrel with nobody."

"If they let you alone," said Mr. Mortiboy; "but I was slighted, John. Good—dear me, here is the hearse!" He pulled out his watch. "Ah! I thought as much—we are due at the church now."

"Shall we send round for Francis Melliship, uncle?"

"No, Lydia," said her uncle with severe irony. "We all of us dance attendance on Mr. Francis Melliship: everybody in Market Basing always has done, since I've known it."

"Don't be hard on a man behind his back," began the farmer.

Mrs. Heathcote shot a glance at him that meant, "How dare you oppose Uncle Mortiboy?" but her husband did not choose to see it. He went on, regardless of consequences.

"I have always respected Mr Melliship. I hope I always shall. And I wish he came to Hunslope oftener than he does."

His wife pinched him viciously. Hers was a difficult part to play. She was very friendly, in her way, with the family at the other bank; but she was Ready-money Mortiboy's nearest of kin.

"My brother-in-law," said Mr. Mortiboy, in tones of satire, "is dressing himself with more than usual care," then, in one gruff blast, "and Francis Melliship is the greatest Peacock in Market Basing! I—hate—Peacockery in man or woman!"

Mrs. Heathcote smoothed her crape demurely. She loved it: I don't mean the crape—dress.

"Farmer-like, eh, John? for you and me. We are not going to begin peacocking, I think."

The mayor's chief assistant now entered with a mournful bow, and proceeded to decorate the chief mourner with a long crape scarf. The chief mourner resented this.

Holding up the scarf, he said, looking at the man,—

"What is the meaning of this gew-gaw?"

"A scarf, sir—quite usual—at all respectable funerals."

"Always worn, sir," said the mayor.

"I never wore one before," said Mr. Mor-

tiboy, testily. "I should have stopped the affair at hatbands and gloves, I think. Plain, but respectable. I hate show. Poor Susan, too, never cared for ostentation. Mr. Ghrimes"—

"I left the matter to Mr. Hopgood, sir. He knows better than I do what to do."

"Always our practice, sir," said the mayor.

"Well, well. Come, put it on then. As they're made, we must have them, I suppose. Poor Susan!"

The old man looked mournfully askant at the great crape rosette at his hip, and at the ends of the scarf dangling about his knees.

He shook his head; and, taking from his pocket a sad-colored silk handkerchief full of holes, he wiped his eyes, but not of tears. There was only one loss Mr. Mortiboy would have shed tears over—the loss of money. At sight of his grief, all the company was affected likewise in different degrees. Lucy Heathcote was by his side in an instant. She kissed the old man. At this he wiped his eyes again.

"I have lost all—all—that—were near to me—now," he said.

"Not all, Uncle Richard," put in Mrs. Heathcote meekly, and hiding her face in turn in her handkerchief.

But the old man never noticed her interruption. He went on,—

"There was Emily—gone—taken from me just—as—we knew each—other—well"—

"Oh!—oh!—oh!" sobbed Lydia Heathcote. She had despised poor Mrs. Mortiboy all her life, said every sharp thing she could think of behind her back, and would not have called her back again to Market Basing for worlds.

"And Dick—my son—my son! I loved that boy—if—ever—I loved any thing"—

His father turned him out of the house one night, years ago, neck and crop.

"Goes and runs away from me; and—I'm left alone—now—Susan's"—

He looked up towards the bedroom above.

"Not alone, uncle dear," said Lucy, in a sweet voice. This young thing loved the old hunks himself, and not his money.

The others hung on his words, for he was the greatest man in the town.

Market Basing, town and people, belonged to him—almost.

"Wife dead, and gone from me." He wiped the unsubstantial tears from his eyes again. "Son dead—and—buried—who knows where? Susan—Susan—

gone! I'm an old man. We spent three hundred — at least, Susan did — trying to — find Dick."

"He was a great trouble to you, sir," said the lawyer, who had got Dick Mortiboy out of some nasty scrapes.

"The pocket-money that — boy — had" — here he nearly cried in earnest — "that his Aunt Susan gave him. If it was not speaking ill of the dead," said Mr. Mortiboy, "I should say — Susan — spoilt him. She always sided with him against his father. Ah! I've said hundreds of times, 'My boy, lightly come, lightly go.' He thought nothing of the money he spent. I did not want him to be a spoilt peacock. She gave him a gold watch and chain the day he was ten years old. I never had one till my father died. I wanted him to be like me. But — it — wasn't to be. People said, 'What you've been all your life getting 'll soon be spent after you're — gone, M-o-r-tiboy.'" —

(Mrs. Heathcote groaned at this picture, and looked hard at her uncle.)

"— After you are — gone — M-o-o-r-tiboy." I used to hope he'd grow up, and alter his ways, and be fond of business, and — all that. But no! Dick's dead — my boy's dead — and — and — I never recollect being separated from Susan before."

"Poor thing! she was such an invalid," said Mrs. Heathcote soothingly.

The old man stared at his niece, but went on without noticing her interruption.

"Ah-h, I — couldn't have said it then: I dare say I couldn't, but I could say it now if I only had — my — boy — Dick — again. 'Let him spend it if he likes.' I could say — when people said to me, 'Mr. Mortiboy, you: money will all be spent' — I could say, 'From — all — my — heart.'"

(It was quite a physical curiosity, this heart of his, that he spoke of so feelingly. It was such a very little one.)

"— I could say from all my heart, 'Well, if those that have the spending of it have as much pleasure in spending it, as I had in getting it'" (here Mrs. Heathcote smoothed her dress, and solemnly shook her head, as if there could be no pleasure to her in spending old Ready-money's hoards; at the same time, she listened with all her ears), "'I'm a satisfied man.'"

"You can't take yours out of the world with you, any more than anybody else can, I suppose," said Mr. Heathcote.

"John!" whispered his wife, in a key of the strongest remonstrance.

"No, Heathcote — no," said the old man; "and I don't know that I want Money's a trouble and an anxiety — and that's all."

A quick step outside; a gentle knock at the hall door.

One second after, Mr. Melliship was in the parlor in the midst of them.

He took his stand close to the table: a fine, handsome man of middle age, whose coat and gloves fitted him perfectly. They bore in their cut the indelible mark of a West-end tailor's skill.

Now, Mr. Melliship was a gentleman, and moved in the best county circles. The others did not, and were afraid of him accordingly. He bowed to them all, but without looking at anybody. His eyes looked straight before him at the wall.

They bowed in return.

Mrs. Heathcote addressed him.

"We began to fear something had kept you, Mr. Melliship, — on this melancholy" —

"Occasion" died away on her voluble tongue.

There was something very strange about the fixed gaze of Mortiboy's brother-in-law.

They all stared where he stared, and found themselves looking at the picture of Susan Mortiboy, painted when she was a comely young woman.

Mrs. Heathcote — irrepressible — recovered herself at once, and translated in an audible whisper, for the company, the thoughts that were passing in Mr. Melliship's mind.

"It is a long time since he was here. He is thinking of Susan or of his sister Emily. It is a melancholly occasion" —

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Mortiboy," he began. Then pressed his thumb-nail hard against his teeth, and looked at the red cloth.

He gulped down something rising in his throat, made an effort to recover his self-possession, and continued, thrusting his hand into his coat-pocket, —

"I I'm — rather absent, I fear. To tell the truth, I hardly feel well this morning. I found this to-day. It — it — rather shook me. You will know the writing. I wish it were true."

He handed a yellow scrap of antique letter paper to Mr. Mortiboy.

The old man took it. It was his wife's writing, — a voice from the dead, though that was nothing to him. He opened the note; then, bursting with anger, turned purple in the face, for he read, —

"THE LATE MR. GASH'S RECIPE FOR REMOVING BALD PATCHES ON THE HEAD: USE CAYENNE PEPPER AND COD-LIVER OIL, WELL RUBBED IN, NIGHT AND MORNING."

Old Ready-money boiled with rage, and gasped for breath.

The top of his own head was as bald as a billiard ball. Trembling violently, he handed the paper in silence to Mrs. Heathcote. She read it with amazement, and stared in expectation, first at her uncle, then at Mr. Melliship.

"Cod-liver oil and cayenne pepper! Good God, man! Years ago—your insult—to me! With my dead sister lying up stairs, have you come here to insult me over her coffin?" roared Mr. Mortiboy, clutching his cravat with his lank fingers.

"I beg your pardon; there must be some mistake here. I am innocent of any intention to insult you."

He took the paper from Mrs. Heathcote, told it mechanically, and replaced it in his pocket, and stared again at the portrait.

On the others, the late Mr. Gash's recipe had fallen like a bombshell.

As a matter of course, for a moment there was a slight titter. Old Ready-money was so angry, so bald, and altogether it was so funny, they forgot where they were.

A titter, instantly suppressed.

They looked at Mr. Melliship for an explanation.

And he looked so strange that morning, not one of them dared ask him for it.

So they sat mute.

Meanwhile Mrs. Heathcote and Lucy, with well-meant but unsuccessful endeavors, tried to soothe the old man.

"He's d-r-u-n-k, I firmly believe," her uncle hissed in Mrs. Heathcote's ear; and he cast an angry glance at the man he had treated for twenty good years as a foe.

But there was yet one more outrage on propriety for them to bear.

Francis Melliship advanced—his head up, his chest thrust forward.

Old Ready-money involuntarily shrank from him.

He was a coward, and afraid.

Mr. Melliship took another step in advance.

Hitherto they had looked at his face, for the table-cover had hidden his legs. Now they looked at them.

"Good heavens! Mr. Melliship. Sir,"—cried the chief assistant, who had been about to endure the banker with a scarf like the others.

"Mr. Melliship!" exclaimed the lawyer and the mayor in a breath, opening their eyes to their widest.

The old man looked. Lucy looked.

"Merciful goodness!" her mother shriek-

ed; "why, you've got light—ahem!—trousers on!"

The astonishment and confusion you can imagine. If you doubt it, try the effects yourself on a like occasion.

Another knock; slightly louder than Mr. Melliship's had been.

Dr. Kerby entered the room—suave, polite. He began to stammer an apology for being a few minutes late; in fact, "he had been—a—attending a lady"—

"Mr. Mortiboy—Mr. Battiscombe—what is the matter?"

A pause. He looked round and met Francis Melliship's eyes full.

And he read their meaning.

"Oh-h-h! we are very old friends, and very good friends," he said, linking his arm in Mr. Melliship's; "and, my dear sir, as one of the most amiable and polite men I ever met a man who never refused me a request"—

"No; my purse is always at the service of the—poor. You mean—the check—for the hospital. I said I would"—

"I must ask you for five minutes of your valuable time; and, as a great favor, now—at once."

They walked out arm-in-arm in the direction of Mr. Melliship's house.

As the two left the room, the doctor had looked behind him very significantly.

Then they forgot every thing in the strange scene they had just witnessed. The old man all angry—Lucy sorry—the others curious.

"I say he's disgracefully tipsy, at one o'clock in the day, and the doctor knew it. But, Mr. Francis Melliship, I shall be even with you"—then in a lower tone, "some day—soon."

The politic lawyer was inclined to assent. True, he did not number among his clients Francis Melliship.

John Heathcote spoke out his mind.

"I think, Mr. Mortiboy, you do Melliship an injustice. Before to-day I have heard of his drinking more than is good for him; but I never believed it. I think he is ill!"

"John!" exclaimed his wife.

"He never meant to insult you or anybody else. He is too much the gentleman to do it."

The old man was getting purple again.

"John!"—and Lydia pinched him as hard as she could.

Various suggestions were made as to the cause and meaning of this strange conduct of Mr. Melliship's.

All the while the solution lay neatly folded on the floor.

Lucy's eye caught it. She picked up a crumpled letter in the same handwriting as the recipe for bald spots.

She just glanced at the contents — lest, perchance, she should add fuel to the fire — and handed her uncle a letter in which his wife, Francis Melliship's sister, had tried to heal a family dispute between her husband and her brother with true woman's tact; and hoped and foretold and prayed too, that they might live in brotherly love for the future.

The old man read it and frowned over it.

"This is what Mr. Melliship meant to give you, Uncle Richard, I feel sure. He gave you the other by mistake."

Old Ready-money shook his head slowly and incredulously.

"Why did he give me the other, then? He is not sober, that's why."

Everybody else believed Lucy's surmise was true. But this did not explain Mr. Melliship's extraordinary conduct in coming to a funeral without being dressed for one.

The whole thing was a riddle; and they were dying to solve it, but could not.

"Will he come back? Are we to wait?" they whispered.

Now all this had wasted half an hour or more; and the men standing at the door were frozen.

No stress of weather must shake a mute's decorum. So their teeth chattered, and their hands and feet were numbed dead.

A decent servant maid came in, and whispered something in the ear of Mrs. Heathcote. She referred her to her uncle.

But the chief mourner was deaf, and the message had to be repeated aloud. When he heard it, he exclaimed, with much irritation, —

"Hester! Brandy! Who for? The mutes? Now what do mutes want with brandy?"

"They are starved, sir, with the cold," said the chief assistant; "and I thought you might be pleased to send them a little drop before we start. Very sorry to trouble you, but the maid said you had the key."

"Certainly not. They can't require it at such a time. They're paid, I suppose."

"Their teeth, sir, they quite chatter; and Mr. Mopes, he's snivelling with the cold, and can't help himself, poor man. I beg your pardon, sir; but a day like this, mutes will get chilled; and when one's teeth get chattering, it looks like a snivel, hold your silk how you may."

"Then tell him not to snivel, from me. He was before me the other day — he snivelled then. It's a way he's got, I think. God bless my heart! — can't they jump

about and keep 'emselves warm? I'd do it."

The revolutionary boldness of Mr. Mortiboy's proposition so utterly staggered the undertaker, that he stood full thirty seconds before he spoke in reply.

"Not well, sir. You see it isn't usual sir — with the profession. But I'll tell them what you say."

A grunt.

Enter Hester, the maid, again.

"Dr. Kerby's compliments, sir, and he's very sorry, and neither he nor Mr. Melliship will be able to be present at the funeral. Mr. Melliship's taken ill."

The others wondered very much and went without them.

Mrs. Heathcote and Lucy spent the time that they were away in settling the nature of Mr. Francis Melliship's complaint.

But they were a long way out in their guesses.

CHAPTER II.

AFTER the coaches had set the mourners down again at Mr. Mortiboy's house, the funeral party had still two pieces of business to perform.

They had to eat the luncheon provided for them, and to hear the will read.

The question they silently debated was whether Susan Mortiboy — who all her life had spent half her income in works of charity, and the other half in keeping up a house for her brother to live in — had ventured to leave any of her money to any thing or any body but Ready-money Mortiboy by her will. She possessed a sum of twenty-five thousand pounds left her by her father. This sum her brother at once took out of the Three per Cent Consols for her, and re-invested it at two per cent — grudgingly paid — with himself. As her life was for years considered a bad one — physically — her brother paid the interest over to her for two very good reasons. First, because he thought he should not have to pay it very long; secondly, because she had the absolute power of disposing of the principal by her will.

This led him to regard charitable institutions of all kinds as his natural enemies — though, for decency's sake, he subscribed five guineas a year to the County Infirmary, and two to the Albert Dispensary. For he felt sure, that, if he did not inherit his sister's money, the charities would get it among them.

So, twelve years and two months before our story opens, he availed himself of a fit of indisposition more severe than usual to help his sister Susan to make her will.

Now, he had in his library a mischievous octavo volume, called "Every Man his own Lawyer," published for one Grantham, in the Strand, and several other worthies of the trade, in the year of our Lord, 1826. Out of this he took a form of a testamentary instrument, in which Richard Roe bequeathed to John Doe certain personal property, under certain conditions, set out with all the old-fashioned piety and verbosity common in the wills and testaments of half a century ago. For this will in the book fitted his sister Susan's intentions to a T. Mr. Mortiboy had struggled hard to make her bequeath her property to him absolutely, but she would not consent; so he gave in with a good grace, made her will himself, and saved three or four guineas Lawyer Battiscombe ought to have pocketed. He read it over to her, and she signed it in the presence of Hester Noble, domestic servant, and John Smith, gardener; and Mr. Mortiboy locked it up in his safe till it should be wanted; through having taken effect. And this was it, fairly written out, in old Ready-money's clerical autograph:—

"In the name of God Amen I Susan Mortiboy of Dergate in the town of Market Basing in the county of Holme spinster being of sound and disposing mind memory and understanding but mindful of my mortality do this second day of December in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and forty-nine make and publish this my last Will and testament in manner and form following that is to say First I desire to be decently and privately buried in the churchyard of the parish in which I shall happen to die without any funeral pomp and with as little expense as may be"—

"Now, that I perfectly agree with," her brother had said, as he was making a rough draft of the will. "The author? Mr. Gifford. Well, Mr. Gifford, you're a very sensible man. You're just of my mind in the matter. No useless pomp and expense."

At this point in the proceedings, however, the old gentleman's feelings had been grossly outraged, for his sister had put him to the pain of writing the words that gave away four hundred pounds sterling, and made certain little specific bequests of personal effects. Reluctantly, too, he had added,—

"And as to all the rest residue and remainder of my estate whatsoever and wheresoever and of what nature kind and quality soever the same may be and not hereinbefore given and disposed of after payment of my just debts legacies funeral expenses and the expense of proving this my Will I do hereby give and bequeath the same to and unto John Heathcote of

Hunslope in the county of Holme gentleman and to and unto George Heathcote of Launton Grange in the same county gentleman nevertheless in trust for and to the use of"—

And the trust was this.

The trustees were to hold the twenty-five thousand pounds for twelve years, and then pay it, with the interest accruing thereon, to Richard Matthew Mortiboy, testatrix's brother—if her nephew, Richard Melliship Mortiboy, should not during that time be heard of, or his death be satisfactorily proved. In the event of his coming back, he was to have the money absolutely.

The twelve years had gone. Dick had not turned up, and it was two months over the limit put down in the will.

The money was Mr. Mortiboy's.

So after a little preliminary humming and hawing, he went to the safe and fetched the will.

"I did not draw that instrument," said Mr. Battiscombe.

"I made it myself," said Mr. Mortiboy.

"The lawyer's best friend is the man that makes his own will—or, for the matter of that, anybody else's."

"Anybody who can read and write, and add two and two together, can make a will, Mr. Ghymes? I've heard you say so, often enough."

"We shall see," said the lawyer, telegraphing privately under the table to Ghymes, by treading on his only corn.

"You will see, Mr. Battiscombe," replied the old gentleman, proudly. He loved law, and delighted to dabble in high-sounding phraseology, of the technical meaning of which he knew nothing at all.

"I think you might have let me have a finger in the pie, sir."

As he spoke, the lawyer telegraphed again to Ghymes; but the tender toe was gone this time. Mr. Battiscombe's boot only crushed the carpet.

"The Court always carries out a man's clear and obvious intentions. I've known this ever since I could read about a probate case."

"Subject to certain rules, more or less clearly defined, sir. No doubt Mr. Mortiboy has made no mistake"—signalling to Ghymes again. "At least, I'm sure I hope so."

"The thing's as plain as a pikestaff. Your boy, that sweeps your office, might have put down my poor dear sister Susan's wishes in black and white as well as you could, Mr. Battiscombe."

"Permit me to doubt it, Mr. Mortiboy: as I found out, one day last week, that he can read, but can't write."

"Then it's a scandal to Market Basing;

for there — are — no — less — than four charity schools."

"He came from Hunslope."

"I asked Battiscombe to take him," said Mr. Heathcote. "He's my wife's garden-er's boy."

"We can't be expected to teach all Hunslope the three R's, Uncle Richard," said his niece apologetically.

"Certainly not, Lydia. Now, I think I may read the — subject of discussion. It is very simple, and very clear — hem! — to my mind."

Old Mortiboy took up his stand near the window. The rest faced round. Ghrimes and Battiscombe exchanged signals again. Having cleared his throat several times, the old gentleman threw himself heart and soul into the business on hand.

He read the will through, from end to end, and nobody made a remark.

"There," said he, looking triumphantly at the lawyer. "I think that is clear enough, even for you, Mr. Battiscombe; and I will say, I have always found you a clear-headed man. The effect is plain, except for those conf — ahem! — legacies. She left her money to Dick — though she knew he was dead when she did it: that was like a woman's obstinacy. And Dick has not come within the twelve years — it's two months over now. And the money's mine — eh, John Heathcote? You see it? You're a trustee?"

Mr. Heathcote made a motion with his hand towards Mr. Battiscombe.

They all looked at the lawyer. He said, —

"So far as regards the effect you intended to produce, Mr. Mortiboy, the will is waste paper, and" —

"Now, Battiscombe, you're a pleasant man, and like your joke and all that; but I put it to you — is this a time for fun?"

"And I answer — no time for fun. Sir, I will stake my reputation, as your legal adviser, on what I say. The trust takes effect from the death of Miss Mortiboy, not from the making of her will. I should have told you that if you had honored me with your instructions."

The folios of blue paper dropped from Mr. Mortiboy's hand. He gasped for breath, turned very yellow, and looked faint as a spent stag.

Lydia — quick-witted — recovered herself first. She saw through the matter in a moment.

"Well, uncle," she said, trying to put the best face on the affair, "you'll have the interest for twelve years, and then have the money. It won't matter to you much, I dare say."

She said this quite cheerfully to her uncle.

The old man pointed his trembling finger towards Ghrimes, and shook his head.

The manging clerk had risen from his seat.

"Mr. Mortiboy," he said, "I feel it is time I should speak. Perhaps you will think I have done wrong. My excuse must be that Miss Mortiboy — to whose kindness I owed much all my life — made me do what I did. I — I — There is a codicil to the will you have read."

And as he said this, he pulled a folded sheet of paper from his pocket.

Except the lawyer, everybody was alive with interest.

"Go on, Ghrimes," said the old man hoarsely. "You never deceived me before."

"Miss Susan made us — Mr. Battiscombe and me — promise sacredly we would never mention this to" —

"You never deceived me before — that I know of young man. But no promise ought to have kept you from coming straight to me. When did — my sister — make a fool of herself, eh? — eh? Go on!"

"The week before she died, Miss Susan called in" —

"You and Battiscombe. Go on! What has she done? For God's sake, out with it!"

Briefly told, she had done this. Revoked her bequest to her nephew, Richard Melli-ship Mortiboy; given the twenty-five thousand pounds to her brother; made him sole executor and residuary legatee, and directed him to put a stained window to her memory in St. Giles's Church; ratified and confirmed the other legacies contained in her will.

The executor's face brightened for one moment when Ghrimes got to the important clause of the codicil.

It clouded again when he heard of the window he was to pay for out of his money.

This subject of complaint lasted him for the rest of the short afternoon, as they sat gloomily over the port and sherry, and the remnants of the funeral collation.

But, if he forgot his trouble about the window, it was to recollect his grievance against his sister for not trusting him, and against the lawyer and his confidential clerk for not telling him what was being done.

"She knew I never would let her have any window or nonsense; that was it," he said, over and over again.

The truth was, his sister had loved her church, had loved her work at the schools and among the poor, and she did want her memory to dwell among them.

At last — and it seemed a long time in coming — the old man was left alone.

Now, as we know that Mr. Richard Matthew Mortiboy — commonly called Ready-money Mortiboy — is the principal legatee under this codicil to his sister's will; and as he is a very rich man, and gives the title to this matter-of-fact story, let us here trace his pedigree, and say a word or two about him.

The Mortiboy pedigree is not a long one. There are four generations in it; old Ready-money, his father, his grandfather, and his great-grandfather. Who his great-great-grandfather was, nobody knows.

Of the four personages who constitute the trunk and chief branches of the heraldic tree, three lived, thrived, and died at Market Basing; and, at the time our story opens, the last is alive and more thriving than any of his ancestors were: for money gets money. If you have but much, you must, in spite of yourself, have more.

The town of Market Basing is on the high road to the North, at such a distance between two more important places that, in the old days, all the coaches stopped there time enough for the passengers to get down, and eat a meal. So, before railways upset every thing on the coach roads, there was no traveller between London and the Land o' Cakes who did not know Market Basing a great deal better than people nowadays know Rugby Junction on the great iron road from London to Liverpool.

The principal inn was the Horse and Jockey; and at this substantial hostelry, the gentleman we will designate Mortiboy the First filled the important though subordinate post of ostler.

Like many other ostlers on the road, Mat Mortiboy had the right of supplying the beasts under his care with his own hay and corn and his master's water. The profit arising from such sale was his perquisite; and a very handsome one it was: and close indeed Mat always was about the savings, which he kept in an old stocking in his hayloft, and in a leathern pocket-book under his coarse shirt.

On the other hand, the proprietor of the Horse and Jockey was proverbially easy as an old shoe: while the servants got fat, the master starved.

In tavern business this is not unfrequently the case.

In 1746 times were bad at Market Basing; and when nobody else would lend mine host of the Horse and Jockey the money he stood in sore need of, his ostler, Mat Mortiboy, tumbled two thousand guineas into his lap, at his lawyer's and took a mortgage deed and covenant for interest at six per centum per annum in return. This — was his signature to the parchment, for he could not write.

Mat was master of the situation now. The innkeeper, old and ruined, died; and Mr. Mortiboy and his fat wife became host and hostess of the principal inn at Market Basing. This worthy couple were sharp as needles, and saving as magpies. They died rich, — the widow two days after her husband, — leaving every sixpence of their fortune to their only child, Matthew. And here begins the reign of Mortiboy the Second. He married, started a brewery on a good scale, and brought up the only child who lived out of a family of five, what he called a "scholar." In his turn, he died, and was buried; and all he had inherited from his father, with all he had gained and saved added to it, he left to his son. Not one groat's worth to church, charity, or his wife's poor relations.

Then begins the long reign of Mortiboy the Third — "the Scholar." This man was a genius — of the lowest order: your pounds-shillings-and-pence, and two-and-two-make-four genius. He cut the Horse and Jockey, taking in his successor smartly; kept the brewery on; sent out travellers all over three or four adjacent counties with his beer, and put half his fortune into Melliship's bank. He became banker, alderman, oracle, and esquire. His union with Miss Ann Ghrimes was blessed with happiness and three children: —

Ann, his first-born, who married her cousin, Mr. Ghrimes, and became Lydia Heathcote's mother.

Susan d. s. p.

And Richard Matthew — the first of his race that ever had a two-barrelled Christian name before the patronymic Mortiboy.

The "scholar" smoked his pipe, and drank fourpenny-worth of gin and water cold, at the rival house — for he dared not face the poor man at his old inn — and took the best company away with him. One-third of a shilling's worth of liquor lasted him a whole evening. If it did not, he smoked a dry pipe, or helped himself from the blue jug that was at everybody's service, pretended it was gin and water, and was just as happy. But he learned a great deal in the parlor of the Angel: who was safe, and who was queer; which were the warm men, and which the poor devils out in the cold. And he turned his information to good account, — letting Brown overdraw to his heart's content, but pulling his neighbor Smith up short at half a crown. This man was wise in his generation. He saw that Market Basing would spread itself; so bought every acre of land close to the town that came into the market, and lent money on the rest.

Living in a time that saw what are called "manias," Mr. Mortiboy bought —

good value — when all the world about him were red-hot for selling; and sold — bad value — when all bought. He carried out the great Tory statesman's maxim — like many another trader — long before it was put into epigrammatic form. All his life, he bought in the cheapest market and sold in the dearest; and he never slept out of his native town a single night, nor wasted a single farthing piece in his life. He lived before tourists were born.

Ann, his daughter, got a thousand pounds down on her wedding day; and all the world grasped Alfred Ghrimes's hand and congratulated him. But his wife died soon after Lydia, their daughter, was born, and he never got another penny from his father-in-law. Indeed, the banker hinted, that, after what had happened, he ought to refund the thousand pounds. But Ghrimes was a farmer, and farmers are a good deal "cuter" than the men of cities give them credit for being. He did not hand over the money, and thence arose a mortal feud. He and his father-in-law never spoke again.

So, when the third Mortiboy died, he had two children to leave his fortune to.

He left his daughter Susan twenty-five thousand pounds in hard cash; and the rest, residue, and remainder of his estate, of whatsoever kind and wheresoever situate, to Richard Matthew his only son.

Ready-money reigned in his father's stead.

The fourth Mortiboy had not a scrap of his father's talent. But he was cautious as the typical Scotchman, greedy as the typical Jew, and cunning as an old fox in a Holmshire cover.

He carried on his bunch one at least of the keys of wealth.

He never spent any thing.

He came of three sires who had money and worshipped it as a god, as the only good thing: father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. He sucked in the *auri sacra fames* with his mother's milk. He never heard any thing talked about in the old house he was reared in, but money, — how to get it, how to keep it, how to put it out to use, and make it breed like Jacob's ewes.

As a baby, his mother checked him when he shook his silver and coral rattle, for fear he should wear out the bells that jingled on it.

He wore calico drawers till his father's trousers fitted him in every thing but length.

At school, he was always the boy who regarded a penn'orth of marbles as an investment to be turned into three-half-pence — not played with.

And this, his father told him, if he kept up the year round (Sundays left out), was fifteen thousand six hundred and fifty per cent per annum. And the boy entered into this great fact, and understood it; worked it out on his slate, and kept it up in apples, pectops, tennis-balls, and other commodities, when marbles were out and these things in.

So he grew up, and was initiated early in life into the mysteries of keeping a country bank. And when you once are on the inside of the counter, you find there is no mystery in it at all.

It consists in getting hold of as much of other people's money as ever they will leave with you, and putting it out, by way of earning interest for your benefit. In lending an apple or two where you know there is an orchard; but not so much as a seedling pip where there isn't one.

In his father's time, Melliship, Mortiboy & Co. had split. The Melliship of the day started a new bank; and Ready-money's father kept the old one to himself, continuing to trade under the old style and title. Then, besides the bank, he had the brewery, — a sound, prosperous concern, that only troubled him twice a year, to take the profits.

The Holmshire iron is not bad stuff for working up when mixed with Staffordshire pig. A clever man, named Hardinge, found this out, and mortgaged his estate for thirty thousand pounds to work the ore in the stone that lay under nearly every field.

But it was not enough. He applied to Mr. Mortiboy, and mortgaged his foundry and his plant, and further encumbered his estate. More money was wanted, and Mortiboy would lend no more. A few thousands would have made the works a fortune to him. But the banker pulled up short, and nobody dared "stand against Mr. Mortiboy," though a dozen would have formed a company and found the money. Mr. Mortiboy foreclosed. Mr. Hardinge died of a broken heart; and works, plant, and estate were the mortgagee's.

Ghrimes, a man of hard and sound judgment, managed every thing. He was Ready-money Mortiboy's factotum, and was incorruptibly honest. Even his master could trust George Ghrimes, and he did. He would have let him dip his hands in treacle, and put them into a bag of Koh-i-noors in the dark, and never felt a qualm. But for this weakness he conceived it his duty to distrust everybody else. He made this vice — in his own eyes — a virtue. He did not believe in any honesty but the honesty of paying what perforce you must pay. And by himself and his standard he

gauged all other men, and thus suspected everybody; — his sister, his niece, his clerks, his servants, his customers.

So in Market Basing the charitable called him eccentric — the malicious a miser. Small towns develop character.

You can see in a tumbler what you fail to observe in a vat.

Mr. Mortiboy was usually called "Old Ready-money." There were half a dozen anecdotes about the origin of the sobriquet. Who wouldn't like to have it? This was the commonly received version: There had come to Market Basing parish church a new parson, and his wife had come with him. Proverbially, new brooms sweep clean, and the parish was in an awful state of heathenism; so she, poor thing, bent on all sorts of good works, called first — subscription-book in hand — on Mr. Mortiboy, their richest parishioner. She did not know he went to chapel. She encountered a shabby man in the bank, — on the doorstep, indeed.

"Is Mr. Mortiboy in?"

"My name, ma'am — at your service."

They stood on the pavement outside.

The rector's wife opened her eyes, and took him in from top to toe in a glance — as a quick woman can.

"Are you Mr. R. M. Mortiboy, sir, — Mr. Rob?"

"Ready-money Mortiboy, ma'am."

So the tale is told. I don't know if this is the true version; but the old man carried his nickname to his grave, and never was called any thing else — behind his back.

He was the last man in the world to be asked for alms. Polite enough, but hard as nails. He had a formula of his own invention, applicable to all occasions.

If any thing was wanted for Market Basing — he was the greatest victim of the poor rates.

If flannels and New Testaments were to be given to the starved niggers of Quashiboo, he thought the stream of charity should be turned on the hungry and houseless ones at home.

But if anybody made a call on him for these, he was instantly impressed with the importance of foreign missions.

For both — he was a little deaf, and times were bad, and his interest in changes of the weather absorbing.

Now, when his guests were gone, and he was alone, his sister's charge concerning the stained-glass window preyed on Mr. Mortiboy's mind. It was all very well for a bishop, in a cathedral — where there are plenty of windows, and plenty of money — to have a memorial window put up to his memory; but, in his sister Susan, such

an injunction was an outrage of propriety. Old Ready-money had very clear notions on his own station in life. And, after all, a parish church had no business with colored windows. At chapel, they did without them. And then, his sister's station was not high enough for memorial windows.

"I'll take Battiscombe's advice about it if it's down in the bill, 'thirteen and fourpence — engaged a long time.' If I can get out of such an absurd direction, I will. What will people say? Very likely, think I did it — and think I'm mad into the bargain. It's just the sort of thing Francis Melliship would go and do, now. Put up a stained-glass window! She should have left it — poor thing! — to her Sunday school teachers and parsons, that have had her money for years, to do that for her! They would have done it, no doubt!"

Mr. Mortiboy quite chuckled at this humorous idea. His face suddenly changed, however, from gay to very grave.

The four candles lighted for his guests were burning on the table!

He quickly blew out three, quenching the last spark of fire at the wick ends with a wet forefinger and thumb, — avoiding smell, and possible waste.

Then he held up the decanters to the solitary candle, and measured their cubic contents of port and sherry with his greedy eye.

Next, he took the candle up in his shaky old hand, walked slowly round the table, and collected the glasses.

"Ghrimes has left half his last glass. Well, George Ghrimes never did drink any thing, so I'm not surprised."

He poured the half-glass of port back into the bottle.

"Lydia, my girl, you'll!" — holding the glass Mrs. Heathcote had used upside down — "get — red — in the — face — like your mother was, if you don't take care."

At last he got to Lawyer Battiscombe's seat.

"Ah! I thought so. Trust a lawyer. Not a drop, if you squeezed the glass for a week."

Then he sat down by the fire, took a lump or two of coal off, and put his feet on the fender. He sat in his easy chair, in thought. Wondering what they would have thought if they had seen him pouring the wine back into the decanters; thinking he should not have cared a rush if they had. Wondering whether Lydia Heathcote counted on his death; thinking she was not quite sure of his money yet. Wondering why his sister Susan could not have left him all her money; thinking he would do his best to defeat her

intentions, and secure the odd hundreds he had neither a legal nor moral right to. Wondering why he felt so drowsy; thinking—

He was fast asleep.

He slept an hour, and the candle burnt down two inches and a half before he was awakened.

His sister's maid had brought in the tea-tray at the usual hour, and her entrance roused her master.

He woke with a start: counted the biscuits on the dish, and questioned the girl in a breath.

"Was I asleep? Ah!—four—I didn't take—six—my nap—eight—to-day: that's it. Never get into—I'm sure, I thought I made nine of 'em before—bad habits, Mary."

"No, sir,"—and exit.

"The minx had had time to have one, I believe. They think they'll take advantage of me; but they're mistaken. They won't."

He got up, fumbled for his keys, and put away the wine and biscuits in the cupboard by the fireplace.

Then he walked to the window, and looked out into the night. It was dark—the moon had not risen; but the street lamp opposite his door threw a good deal of light into the room.

He blew out his last candle.

"If I'm only thinking—and, goodness knows, I've plenty to think of—I can think quite as well without a candle. Besides, this room is always light."

He never touched his tea, but sat musing till he dozed off again.

When he woke, his fire was out, his legs were cramped, and it was a quarter to nine by his watch. He pulled the bell.

"What a thing habit is! Because I don't happen to have twenty minutes' sleep in the afternoon, I waste the whole of a precious evening."

"Shall I lay the cloth here, sir?"

"No. Certainly not. I shall take my supper in the kitchen when you're gone to bed. Tell Hester and the cook to come to me."

Dressed in black gowns, and with their aprons ready for their eyes, the servants waited his commands. They found him sitting with a little housekeeping book of his sister's in his hands. They thought Mr. Mortiboy was about to improve the occasion. But they had misjudged him. He was going to discharge them.

"Habit is a curious thing," he began, pouring out a cup of the cold tea, and sipping it appreciatively. "I missed my usual little nap on the stairs to-day, and I

have wasted a precious evening—a precious evening through it."

The corners of the white aprons dropped. The three domestics waited for him while he took another sip of tea.

"I ought to have done this earlier; but thoughts of her who is gone"—he looked upwards—"kept me from it."

The aprons up again, ready for use. Hester, a very old retainer, in real tears.

"You've heard me called eccentric?"

"Oh, no, sir!"—mumbled.

"You've heard 'em call me old Ready-money?"

"Oh, no, sir!"—very loud.

"Yes, you have. You were—Susan's—servants, not mine. You've heard me called rich, now?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I should not have been called rich, if I had spent all my money like my poor sister did. One servant will be quite as many as I shall want." Aprons dropped again.

"Hester, you can do all I shall require. So, cook and Mary, my girl, I really must give you notice; for I can't keep you. But I can give you excellent characters, both of you."

"Thank you, Mr. Mortiboy," said the cook, facing him, with arms a-kimbo, "thank you, Mr. Mortiboy; but my mistress, as I lived with four year and three-quarters—come Michaelmas was five years—would do that for me any day. And I've only been here four months, which"—

"I have given you notice," Mr. Mortiboy interposed. "I shall not keep you your month. I shall pay your wages instead."

He was getting angry.

"Thank you, sir. Which is the law, and rich and pore must both abide by it"—dropping a most irritating courtesy.

"I'll pay you now!" cried Mr. Mortiboy.

"If you please, sir; and I'll pack up my boxes this very night, and go. For I couldn't abear"—

Poor little Mary, frightened out of her wits, tugged at cook's gown.

"Don't pull me, Mary. Mr. Mortiboy never was my master, and never shall be."

"I'll take your black dress away from you, if you say another word."

"No, sir—'xcuse me, that'll go with me to my next place; and I sha'n't trouble you for a character. And I have heard you called Old Ready-money, and called you so myself"—

Before she could finish her sentence, the ruler of the roast was dragged out of the room by Hester and Mary.

An hour and a half later, Mr. Mortiboy

had recovered from his discomfiture, paid the cook, and seen her and her baggage off the premises, and sent Mary and Hester to bed.

He sat before the kitchen fire, eating a slice of cold, boiled beef laid on a crust of bread. He dispensed with a plate and fork, but had a very sharp knife in his hand.

He cut his mouthfuls into equal paralograms, with mathematical precision, and slowly got through his frugal supper.

He rose from his chair, unfastened the door, and looked out into his garden.

The moon was up, but heavy clouds obscured it every moment, drifting swiftly past.

An idea had for half an hour held possession of his mind. He was going out.

To pay a visit to the churchyard.

To find out for himself really which was the smallest window. The will said nothing about the size.

He found his great-coat hanging in the passage, without a light.

He fumbled at the latch and bolts of the front door, and let himself out.

The moon shone brightly on it and him; and he saw in chalk characters, —

**"OLD REDDY-MUNNY IS A
MIZER."**

scrawled on it.

"Now this is too bad — to-day," he exclaimed, producing from his inner coat pocket the sad-colored handkerchief full of holes. "I must wipe it off. What is the good of a policeman? I'd give — I'd give — a — a shilling to know who does it, and hang the little devils for it too."

He rubbed the writing off his door, and went on his way. His house opened on the street. Across the street was a paddock. The field belonged to him. He had a key, and let himself in.

This clove was a little gold mine to him. It was the arena on which all flower-shows, agricultural and horse shows, wild-beast shows, and rider's circuses were held.

A few sheep started as he crossed the wet grass at the side by the church.

In the churchyard, the clouds hid the moon, and hid the ponderous figure that had dogged him there — from his house door, over the paddock wall, into the graveyard.

The old man went on.

"The moon gone in? But I'm not superstitious. I'd as soon sleep in a churchyard as anywhere else," he said to himself as he groped his way round the south wall of the church. "Ha! light again!"

The man behind him dropped three or four paces back.

Not a sound was heard in the deep, wet grass.

"Now we shall see what we are at. There is a smaller window than this, though, I know — and this is not a big one. I should have made a first-rate window-peeper in the old tax days.

"Ha! this is the window I had in my eye. Now, could it cost ten pounds to put in a beam — u — tiful window there?"

The moon was clouded again, and his attendant gained on him. There was a corner between them that was all.

"Be whipped if I think it could cost ten pounds. Eight ought to do it."

The man came nearer. His arm was raised.

"No mention of which window you meant to have, Susan, my poor, dear sister. Ha! ha! Ghymes was taken into your confidence, not your own flesh and blood."

Nearer still the arm came. It almost touched him.

"Well, now, I've been all round the church, I think. I'll go back, or I shall go and catch cold in this grass. It's like a little river. D—n! What's this?"

He had stumbled over some hard substance in his path.

The moon shone out brightly, and showed him the footstone of his wife's grave. He had not been near it for years.

He read the inscription on the headstone in the bright moonlight.

"Want's doing up a bit," he muttered.

The man who was dogging him was close at his back.

"There's room for Dick's name now, if we had heard about him. But no, poor fellow — no! — I think I'll go in again, now. I feel chilly — I" —

As he spoke, a hand like a blacksmith's fell on his shoulder, and held him in a vice!

CHAPTER III.

MR. MORTIBOY'S first impulse, on feeling the hand upon his shoulder, was to cry for help; his second, when a moment's reflection had convinced him of the entire folly of the first, to shake off the hand and turn round. It must be confessed that a third impulse tempted him to break from the stranger's hold altogether, and flee with what speed he might. His assailant released him, however, at once; and Mr. Mortiboy sharply turned upon him, trembling.

"Who — who — are you?" he stammered.

It was a figure he did not know; that of a tall, strong man warmly wrapped in a

thick pilot jacket, with a stout stick in his hand, and a round felt hat upon his head. As the moon came out by fits and starts between the flying clouds, Mr. Mortiboy made out, besides these details, a thick, black beard, which covered all the face from the eyes downwards, and hid a foot or so of throat and chest.

"Old Mr. Mortiboy, I think you are?" said the stranger, in a rough, harsh voice.

"Mr. Mortiboy certainly — and perhaps old. Pray, who are you, and what do you want?"

"I want to speak to you. Come out of this mouldy old church-yard, and go home. I will walk with you."

"You can come to-morrow to the bank. That is where I receive strangers."

"I shall do nothing of the kind. I shall go home with you now. So as soon as you've done your business — whatever that may be — in this convivial gathering-place, we'll go on together to Derngate."

"Is it business you want to see me about?"

"I suppose you don't have many evening callers for pleasure, do you, Mr. Mortiboy?"

"I do not. I am not one who wastes his time in gossiping with people."

"Not had many parties since your son went away, I suppose?"

Mr. Mortiboy laid his hand upon the stranger's arm.

"My son! Did you know my son Dick? Can you tell me any thing about him?"

"Go on home, and I will tell you all I know."

"It's twelve years and two months," growled Mr. Mortiboy to himself — "twelve years and two months, yesterday. I wonder if he'll tell me what became of the boy."

He led the way home: not by the pad-dock, through the streets — a way the stranger seemed to know pretty well, as he swung along the street by the side of him, great-shouldered and burly, looking up at the names over the shops, as if he was trying to read them; nodding his head, too, with a certain air of recognition, as they passed the public-houses.

But it does not take long to exhaust the streets at Market Basing; and the pair found themselves in a very few minutes on the steps of Mr. Mortiboy's house.

"Still live here, eh?" asked the stranger.

Mr. Mortiboy, not without a certain feeling of uneasiness, opened the door, and admitted his guest. The hall was perfectly dark, and he bade him wait while he struck a light. To his terror and amazement, the stranger, who evidently knew where things

stood, deposited his hat on the hat-stand, and his stick in the umbrella-stand. Now this familiarity with places in a perfect stranger, and in the dark, savored of the supernatural; and though Mr. Mortiboy was not a superstitious or a nervous man, he trembled slightly, and looked over his shoulder at his visitor, as he led the way to the parlor.

As he peered curiously at him, he could not help thinking of the devil.

It was the room which had been the scene of the will-reading. There was no fire; and only the one bedroom candle which Mr. Mortiboy carried in his hand.

The stranger — he was visible now — was a man who seemed about thirty two or three years of age. His black curling hair was crisp and short; his figure was tall and muscular; his forehead was broad and square; and his eyes had a sort of fierce light about them which might mean many things.

Mr. Mortiboy raised the candle, and coolly held it before his face while he scrutinized him. He put it down after his inspection, which the stranger bore without flinching.

"I don't know you. What do you want with me? And what have you got to tell me?"

"You do not know me?" asked the other.

"I do not, sir. And, to tell the truth, I hardly want to know you; for I mistrust the look of you."

His visitor reached out his hand, and seized a decanter with a glass of wine left in it.

"It's a cold night, and with your leave" — he smelt it, and put it down with a shudder of disgust. "Sherry. No, thank you. But haven't you got a fire anywhere? Isn't there one in the kitchen?"

Mr. Mortiboy stared at him with amazement. What had this familiar stranger to do with his kitchen? It was a lonely house, and he began to think of violence and midnight marauders.

"If we have business, it will be short, I suppose, and you can transact it in this room, cold or not, just as well as in the kitchen. Sit down, and say what you have to say, and go."

"We have business; but it is so long that I shall probably stay here all night. Take the candle, Mr. Mortiboy, and we will go to the kitchen, where you generally sit when Hester goes to bed. Follow me. I know the way."

He took the candle; and, going into the hall, turned to the left.

The old man went after him as he strode out of the room, and clanked in his great

boots along the passages — which he seemed to know well enough — in great wonderment and not a little terror. But how was he to disobey a man so big and so masterful — a man too, who knew the house as well as he did himself?

There was a bright fire in the kitchen, and the strange visitor sat down, and warmed himself.

"It is twelve years," said the stranger in a deep bass voice, "since your son Dick ran away, — since, rather, you turned him out of the house."

"Twelve years and two months yesterday."

"Hang your two months. You have never heard from him since he left you?"

"Never."

"Would you like to hear from him again?"

"If I knew he had been doing well. If it was to hear that the promise of his youth had been broken, I should like to hear of him."

"Would you like, then, to hear that your son Dick, very early in his history after leaving you, saw the many errors of his ways, and reformed; that he became steady, industrious and respectable; that, in short, he got money, and is, consequently, much revered and respected by all good men?"

"I should. Good heavens, man, if this is what you have to tell me, be quick about it!"

"First, Mr. Mortiboy" — he had spoken throughout in a rough, constrained voice —

"I have had a longish journey, and have caught a cold. Give me a glass of brandy."

"Brandy — brandy! It's what the confounded undertakers asked for this morning. I am sorry that I have no brandy at hand, sir. Would you like some gin?"

The stranger nodded. Mr. Mortiboy went to a cupboard which he unlocked, and took out a bottle and a wine glass. Before handing it to his guest, he held it up to the light, and then measured the contents by the length of his finger. It was two joints over the length of the middle finger. He shook his head; and muttering, "I'm half afraid she's found the way to the cupboard," poured out a glass cautiously, as if it had been the finest Chartreuse. His visitor tossed it off quickly; and, taking the bottle from his hands, filled a second glass, and tossed that off. Then he sat down, and meditated for a few moments: Mr. Mortiboy watching him with his hands on his knees. The old man's nature was stirred up by the mention of his son's name. Old hopes, old affections, old memories, rose again in his heart, where they had been silent and buried for more than half a score of years.

"Tell me about Dick," he said impatiently, drumming his heels upon the floor.

The stranger stood up and half bent over him.

"I am Dick," he said softly and in his natural voice.

Mr. Mortiboy leapt up as if he had been shot. He seized the candle again, and held it to his face. He peered in his eyes. He looked again. Then he put down the candle, and answered in a quavering voice almost in the words of Scripture, —

"The eyes are the eyes of my son Dick and the voice is his voice. But I do not know him — I do not know him. Dick was not so tall; Dick was smooth-faced; Dick was afraid of me. You are not Dick, sir. You are some impudent impostor, trying to cheat me out of a few pounds because you know that I want my son Dick to come back again. That I want him," he repeated piteously. "I want him."

"Dick was nineteen, when you turned him out of your house, and bade him darken your doors no more. It is no great wonder if his face *was* smooth; and I think you will remember, if you reflect, that you gave him ample cause to be afraid of you."

"Prove to me — prove to me — that you are my son, my own son!"

The old man's spare thin form — almost as tall as his son's — shook with emotion and excitement, and he stretched out his arms in a sort of wild yearning.

"Shake hands, father, and sit down, and I will tell you every thing."

He held out both hands frankly.

Mr. Mortiboy took one hand timidly, and kept it in his, patting it coaxingly.

"Tell me something," he said — "the smallest thing — to prove that you are really Dick."

The stranger put his hand into his breast pocket, and took out a little roll.

"When your son left your house, did you tell any one the reason why you turned him out in disgrace?"

"No one to this day knows the reason but Dick and myself. Whisper it."

"Then — is no one listening? — I will tell you. He was not extravagant, but he wanted money from time to time, as all young men will. His Aunt Susan gave him a little. You gave him none. He forged a check: it was only for five pounds; but he forged it! Have you got that check?"

"It has never left my pocket-book."

"Take it out, then. I am going to have it back again. You paid the money, and you told him that you would never forgive him; that you would never see his face again."

"I did — God forgive me! — I did."

"You did. You wrote him a letter to London, in answer to his. Here is the letter. I will read it. You remember that it was very short?"

"Your father sends you the enclosed ten-pound note. Go and retrieve your character."

"Is not this the letter?"

The old man took it with trembling hands.

"It is," he cried; "it is. And you are really Dick?"

"Stay. Let me finish. The ten pounds and the five pounds make fifteen. Suppose we say that this sum had accumulated at compound interest for twelve years: it would by this time have amounted to twenty-six pounds, eighteen shillings, and perhaps a penny or so over. Here are twenty-six pounds, eighteen shillings, and sixpence, which I propose to give you in return for the check."

He took the money out of a small bag, into which it had been counted, and poured it on the table.

Mr. Mortiboy counted it over again carefully; but this was habit. Then he took out from a pocket-book—one of those flat leather books, bursting with papers, which suggest all sorts of things to do with investments—an envelope.

It was labelled grimly enough, "The last of Dick." In it was an old check, stamped and initialed by the clerks of the bank. He handed it across, and waited in silence.

His visitor read it, put it in the fire, and went on.

"So far we are quits. You have your money back. But our quarrel has yet to be made up. By the way, do you remember my falling into the fire when I was a boy, and burning my arm? See here!" He drew up his sleeve, and showed a small, deep scar in the left arm. "One does not imitate these things."

"You are Dick," cried his father. "I know you now. I knew you, really, directly you spoke in your old voice. But every thing else has changed in you. And you are so big."

"Will you shake hands?"

His father shook hands with him, but not as yet quite cordially. In his mind—the moment he found it was his son, and no other who had come back to him—arose a feeling which jarred upon and was discordant with the natural joy of his heart: a suspicion that perhaps he had only come to borrow money, or, worse still, to live upon him. Parental affection was nipped in the very bud by the prospect of fresh expense, like the apple blossoms by an east wind.

"Go on, Dick; tell me about yourself."

"No. Tell me first about yourself."

"I am well—I am well. Not much better off, it's true; but bodily, well."

"And my aunt?"

"Dead, Dick—dead! She died last week, and was buried to-day. And O Dick, Dick, what a pity you did not come home a week sooner!"

"Why?"

"Because, if you had, you would have come in for all her money. As it is, I have it—I have it. Not much it is true; and saddled with all sorts of vexatious bequests. A hundred here, and a hundred there, and a memorial window to put up. Dear, dear; what a waste! What a waste!"

"A memorial window? ho, ho! In the church? ha, ha! But we'll have a cheap one, father—we'll have a cheap one. I know the way to set about getting painted glass at cost price."

"Do you?" asked his father eagerly.

"Tell me how."

"Matter of business, my dear sir," answered the son, with an air of importance.

"We must see our way in other things first. And so the poor old lady's dead! Well, I'm sorry."

"And what have you been doing with yourself?"

"Do you want me to give you the history of twelve years? That will take more than one evening's talk. As many evenings, perhaps, as I shall be with you."

"Why, Dick—why? You are not going away directly you come home, are you?"

"Business may take me. I've got my affairs to look after."

Mr. Mortiboy brightened up; and his fatherly affection, relieved of the cold wind of doubt, glowed and flamed in his heart, till he was fain to rise from his chair, and seize his son's hand, which he shook for several moments with every sign of lively emotion. Then he poked the fire, and took up the gin bottle.

"Dick, on such a night as this, we must drink our own healths. Shall it be port,—they did not drink it all,—or shall it be brandy?"

"Brandy, father, for me."

Mr. Mortiboy retired with the one candle, and presently returned, bearing a bottle of brandy, which he opened with great care and ceremony.

His son had lit a short wooden pipe, and was smoking as quietly as if he had never left his native land.

"I always have one pipe, and a glass of something," said his father. "And since poor Susan was taken, I mean to get rid of every body but old Hester, and she goes to

bed at eight. I send 'em to bed early. So that we are quiet and to ourselves down here. Now talk to me, Dick."

Dick took a long pull at the brandy and water.

"Where am I to begin? Let me see. Well, when I left England, which was not very long after I left you, I went first to the Cape, where I tried my hand up country at sheep and sheep-farming. But it was poor work. No money to be got, be as careful as you please. Got tired of that. Went to America. Went to the California diggings, and did pretty well. Went prospecting to Mexico"—

"What's 'prospectin',' Dick?"

"Looking for silver. Found plenty, of which I will tell you another time. Then the American war broke out, and then I had a grand stroke of luck; for I took up blockade-running."

"No—did you really, though, Dick? did you really?" The old man's eyes sparkled with satisfaction. "There was money to be got there."

"There was, and we got it. But that came to grief at last. We ran the good little craft ashore,—here's to her memory,—and lost her. Then, to make a long story short, we realized our investments, bought a cotton estate of three thousand acres, and have been doing well enough ever since."

"And you're really worth money, my boy?"

"Worth—well, I don't know how many thousands, that's a fact; because we haven't reckoned up for the best part of two years. But we've got money; and here I am, ready to invest some of it by your advice, if you would like to help me in that way."

"Then you're welcome, Dick"—Mr. Mortiboy held out his hand this time with real cordiality—"you're welcome, my boy; and I will help you to invest it."

"So you shall, sir."

"And—and—you haven't taken to drinking, Dick, and are quiet I hope? Because I have a very quiet house here,—very quiet and retired,—and could not change my habits."

"As for my habits, a mouse couldn't be quieter. You'll let me smoke, I suppose?"

"Yea."

"And as for drink, let me have a glass or so of grog, of an evening—gin and water—any thing—and, as long as I stay with you, I shall be contented. Let us save money, at any rate."

"Well said—well said. Now, look here, Dick. I allow myself a bottle of gin a week. We will have two bottles between us. Is it a bargain?"

"It is."

"And we could share the expense—extra expense, I mean—between us, Dick."

Richard Melliship Mortiboy, i.e., Mr. Mortiboy, jun., looked at the author of his being with an amused twinkle in his eye.

"We shall not quarrel about that. And, so long as I am here, I shall be able to help about the bank, and all the rest of it. Not for nothing, you know."

"Assuredly not for nothing. And you can tell me about the blockade-running, and how the money was got. Any of it come home with you, Dick?"

"Some of it—a little—is in London. The rest is in Mexico: safely invested."

"Oh! in Mexico. But that's a long way off."

"Only four weeks. That's where the estate is. You can't bring the land away, you know."

"Ah, no! Dick, I am glad you've come back. Be a credit to me,—and—there's no saying what may not turn up. But, O Dick! what a pity you didn't turn up seven days ago, in time to get your poor aunt's money."

"And so you went to the churchyard to-night."

"I was passing, by the merest accident in the world; and it just occurred to me that I would turn in, and see what would be the properest window, the best, you know, for the memorial of your aunt."

"Not quite by accident, father. I followed you," said his son. "I'd pick out the smallest."

"No! Would you, though? Would you really, Dick? Don't you think people would talk? I did think of it, it's true."

"Let 'em talk! And now, governor, that we're all friends again, let us have one more go of brandy and water, and I'll light another pipe; and we'll have a talk about old times."

They talked till a very late hour for Mr. Mortiboy. And then Dick asked where he was to sleep.

"Lord!" replied his father, "I never thought of that. There's only my bed and your poor aunt's. The spare beds are not made up and ready."

"Well, she's gone, you know. So I suppose I can have that?"

"If you don't mind."

"Mind? Not I, indeed. Put me any where. I once slept in the bed of a man who had been bowie-knifed in it the night before, and was none the worse for it. Mind? Not I. It's the old room, I suppose?"

His father led him to the room. Dick gave a look of approval round it, and proceeded to undress. Round his waist was a

heavy belt, which he threw on the table with a crash.

"What's that?"

"Some of the 'ready'" he said. "Some of the stuff that we're all so fond of. Gold, father—gold!"

"Dick," said Mr. Mortiboy solemnly, "I'm *very* glad you've come back. And more glad still, that you've come with so much right principle."

He went away, and his son went on with his toilet.

Mr. Mortiboy came back, and put his head in at the door.

"Don't waste the light, Dick. You're burning one of your poor aunt's waxes. I like to see all the lights out before I get into bed myself."

"All right, governor," said his son, blowing it out. "The old chap's the same as ever," he muttered. "Damn his bottle of gin a week. I think the compound interest showed true repentance, though."

In three minutes he was sleeping the sleep of the virtuous.

And this is how Dick Mortiboy came home again.

CHAPTER IV.

MR. MELLISHIP and Dr. Kerby, after they left Mr. Mortiboy's house on the morning of the funeral, walked to the bank, the doctor leading the other gently by the arm. They entered at the private door; and the banker led the way to his study, where he sat down and leaned his head on his hand.

"Still the same symptoms?" asked the doctor.

"Still the same. I forget what I am doing. You see how I have offended everybody this morning. My mind is dwelling perpetually on one subject."

"What is that?"

"Money, my friend, money. My brain seems troubled at times, and I hardly know whether the thing I am thinking of is real, or only the vision of a disordered fancy. Can your medicine do nothing to relieve me?"

"Have you been trying no medicine of your own?"

The banker sighed.

"I have not been able to keep my hands from the brandy."

The doctor shook his head gravely, and said nothing for a while.

"You must go away, you know. I told you so months ago. You must have complete rest and change for three months at least."

"As well talk of rest and change for three years."

"My dear old friend, the human brain is not like an iron machine. You can't work it for the whole period of your natural life without rest. You must take a holiday."

"I cannot—yet, doctor."

"If I speak as your doctor, I must say professionally, Then get some other advice than mine. But let me speak as a friend, and say, For God's sake! take a holiday, or something evil will happen to you."

"What, doctor—what?" asked Mr. Melliship, eagerly.

But his adviser put the question by.

"There are all sorts of mischief—to brain, to stomach, to heart—wrought by long and continuous work. Let us avoid them all by taking a holiday."

Mr. Melliship hesitated. Then he took up an almanac, dotted with memoranda.

"If I cannot trust my memory, I can trust these," he murmured. "I shall be comparatively free in a fortnight, doctor. I promise you that, if I possibly can, I will take a holiday then."

"And, until then, no more stimulant than is absolutely necessary."

"I promise that too."

When this conversation was over, it was too late to go to the funeral.

The doctor went his way. And the banker rang the bell, and summoned his chief clerk, to whom he explained that a sudden indisposition had prevented him from attending the funeral, and would keep him in his own study. And then he wheeled up his sofa to the table, and fell into a long reverie.

Half an hour before six he rose, and went up to dress for dinner.

Dinner at Mr. Melliship's was a solemn and sacred institution, hedged round by the triple armor of an absolute punctuality, evening dress, and a certain stately courtesy, with which the master of the house treated his guests.

To-night there were no visitors; and Mr. Melliship, descending to his drawing-room at five minutes before six, found that the only occupants were his wife and daughter. His son Frank had still to come; but the banker, taking no notice of his absence, sat thoughtfully in an easy chair, and resting his head on his hand, contemplated the coals. His womankind, to whom all his moods were sacred, abstained from interrupting him; and, to the astonishment of the servants, six o'clock struck without the familiar accompaniment of the bell by which Mr. Melliship was wont to intimate to his *famuli* that he waited for no one.

It was a quarter past six when Frank, who had returned late and dressed hastily, came into the room. Mr. Melliship looked at his watch abstractedly, and rang the bell without saying a word.

The banker was a man who loved to have finished with the day before the dinner hour. The evening was his time of enjoyment and recreation. Unlike Mr. Mortiboy, he took little pleasure in work, and none in the daily details over which he exercised a compulsory rule. Naturally indolent, and finding his chief pleasure in literary and artistic pursuits, he yet worked conscientiously every day in his office behind the bank, where his clients found him when they came to deposit their money with him, or to ask his advice. He had no confidential manager, such as Mr. Ghrimes — probably because he had not had the good fortune to find among his clerks a man of ability and integrity enough to gain his entire confidence. He was well served, however, better than Mr. Mortiboy was, because his people liked him; but his staff were all of inferior capacity, and there was not one among them whom he could trust with aught beyond the routine business of the bank. The work, consequently, was sufficiently difficult at all times, and of late had been — owing to the issue of certain transactions — more arduous than ever. It was in the evening, when the desks were locked and the papers put by, that Mr. Melliship was able to breathe freely, and might fairly be said to live.

For many years he had looked forward to the time when his son Frank should be able to take his place, and carry on the business of the bank. That time had now come. Frank's education at Harrow and Cambridge was finished; and young Melliship had returned home, — though with no great amount of distinction, — and was ready, as soon as his father should propose it, to begin the preliminary course of bank training which was to fit him for the work of his life. But, strangely enough, his father as yet had made no sign; and, though all the world knew that Frank was to become a partner, his days were idle, and, against his will, spent chiefly in shooting and hunting.

Nor was this all. Of late a singular change had come over his father. Mr. Melliship, once the most genial and even-tempered of men, was now uncertain in his moods, fitful and capricious. The old expansiveness of his character seemed to be gone; and he had ceased to take his old interest in those things which had been formerly his chief topic of conversation.

Frank felt — what both he and his sister were somehow afraid of saying openly —

that his father's character had undergone some sort of deterioration. How and why, he was unable to guess. Only Dr. Kerby knew, what we know, that, in his over-worked head, were the seeds of that most subtle and dangerous disease, paralysis of the brain.

The change showed itself in many ways. Mr. Melliship had been a great giver of dinners. To sit at the head of his own table, feeling himself in culture, intellect, and — it must not be forgotten — in personal appearance, the superior of his usual guests, was an infinite pleasure to this handsome and stately man. He had some acquaintance — such acquaintance as men in the country reckon no small distinction — among literary men, and could invite a lion of lesser repute to stay with him. The lion would roar at his dinners. And he had friends on the Continent who sent him visitors. So that Mr. Melliship had opportunities of calling together his friends to meet distinguished foreigners, and to hear him converse with them — which he could do fluently — in French and Italian. And he used to patronize artists, and invite them to stay with him. Moreover, it was whispered that he had written papers for what were vaguely called "the Quarterlies;" though to this he never confessed. He was a special friend of the rector by reason chiefly of this culture he had acquired, which sat so gracefully upon him. The squirearchy of the neighborhood regarded him as an ornament to their society; and by all men, in all classes, Mr. Melliship was spoken well of: by all men but one, — his brother-in-law, the man who had married his sister. Ready-money Mortiboy had called him hard names for twenty years.

But now the hospitalities at the bank were contracted; fewer visitors came from town, and no dinners were given. To all Frank's inquiries of his sister, he could get no satisfactory answer, save that things were really changed, and that his father's old serenity was gone, to give way to fits of taciturnity and a habit of retreating to the study, sacred to his own privacy since the birth of his children.

This night, at dinner, he was more silent than ever. The talk, however, such as it was, was chiefly carried on by Mr. Melliship himself, in a jerky manner, and with an evident effort.

He sent away his plate almost untouched, but swallowed bumper after bumper of Madeira, — a new thing for him to do. Frank and Kate observed it with silent consternation. Then he broke upon the little chatter of his wife with a sudden and disagreeable laugh.

"The most absurd thing," he said,

"really the most laughable thing—I actually went to the funeral to-day in colored trousers!"

"Why, my dear," exclaimed the wife. "It will be town talk!"

"I can't help it. I forgot entirely that I was not dressed. It was certainly the most absurd mistake I ever made."

Then he lapsed again into silence; while Frank—on whom a very uneasy feeling had fallen—hastened to relate stories of absent-minded men, and how they put themselves into ridiculous positions. But his father took no notice.

Frank noticed, with relief, that he drank very little wine after dinner; and he proposed, almost immediately after his mother and sister had retired, that they should go up stairs for tea.

Mr. Melliship rose at once, and led the way; but turning back, as if he recollected something, he sat down again.

"There was something I wanted to say, Frank—what was it? Yes—yes; I have not been altogether well for some little time."

"So I have observed, sir. Can I not do something to help you at the bank,—assist you in some way?"

"No, my dear boy—no—not just yet. But in a few days I hope to get every thing settled—every thing arranged for your joining me. And my own—yes, if things turn out so. But suppose they do not?"

Then he relapsed into silence again.

"Come, father, we will hope they will turn out all right. Why should they not? Let us go and have some tea, and a little music."

Mr. Melliship laughed.

"Yes; tea, and a little music. So we wind up the day, and ease our cares. 'Gratior it dies.' Which of them was it—I think there was one—who had soft music played while his veins were opened in a bath?"

"Good heavens! I don't know," said Frank, looking at his father anxiously. "But come up stairs."

Mr. Melliship took his tea-cup, and sat in his chair, and began to talk—for the first time for many weeks—for the little ordinary matters of the day to his wife.

"Play me *my* sonata, Kate," he said to his daughter, "while I tell you all the particulars of to-day's gloomy business."

Frank watched him through the evening with a growing intensity of anxiety. These singular transitions from a gloomy taciturnity to an almost incoherent utterance, and from this back to the old easy, pleasant manner, alarmed him. And then his reference to affairs of business. What affairs? He had never inquired into them; he knew

nothing about his father's pecuniary position. He had always been accustomed to the appearance of wealth in the domestic arrangements, to an ample allowance, to the gratification of all reasonable wishes, and he had asked no more. It occurred to him now, for the first time, that these gloomy fits of his father's might have some solid cause in the affairs of the bank; and a shudder passed through him when he reflected—also for the first time—that banks in other places got into difficulties, and why not the bank of Melliship & Co.

But Kate played on; and her mother, with her work in her hands, chattered, while the two men trembled. Are not women happy in this, that they seldom feel the blow before it falls? To men belong the long agony of anticipation, the despairing effort at warding off the stroke of fate, the piquancy of remorse, the bitterness of regret, and the dull, dead pain of fore-shadowing—that *προσόκια* of which Paul speaks. These they bear in silence mostly; while their women wonder what has come over them, or are only vaguely distressed in mind with the fear that something has disagreed with the stomach of those they love. For women have this very odd and inexplicable feeling about men, that their first thought of how to please them takes the form of something to eat, and their first thought of uneasiness flies back to something eaten. And on them, so unprepared, comes the blow—heavy and cruel it may be, but not so heavy, not so cruel, not so destitute of comfort and compensation as it has appeared to the men who have suffered from it for so many months already.

About ten Mr. Melliship got up.

"Good-night, children," he said. "I am going to my study. Where did I put the book I was reading?"

"What was it, papa?" asked Kate.

"The Memoirs of Lord Castlereagh." Thank you, my dear, here it is. Have you read it, Frank? You shall have it, if you like, to-morrow. There is a very singular story about him. One night, as he was lying awake in a long, rambling room in an old house in Ireland, a fire burning at the other end of the room, he saw a child step out from the embers. The child, advancing towards him, grew larger and larger, and at last stood by his bedside, a giant in stature, glaring at him with the wild look of despair, wounded and bloody. He rose, seized his sword, and advanced upon the phantom. As he drew near, the shape retreated, growing smaller and smaller, till it became a child again, and vanished in the fire. You know he afterwards fell by his own hand. Do you think the figure

appeared to him again? I have sometimes thought so."

He looked round the room in a strange, wistful way, and went away without saying another word.

"I don't know, I'm sure," said Mrs. Melliship, as her husband left the room, "why your father should tell us such a dreadful story; and to-day, too, after the funeral, when we wanted cheering up."

"I suppose," said Kate, "that his own thoughts have been turned all day in the direction of death, and that he cannot shake off the impression of the morning. Besides, you know how fond he was of poor Miss Mortiboy."

They did not know he had been closeted with Dr. Kerby while the service was being said at the church.

A ray of hope struck Frank. His father was not well. The funeral of his old friend had, as Kate put it, turned his thoughts in the direction of death.

"I will go," he said, "and see whether I can be of any use to my father. He is certainly not well to-night."

"He ate no dinner at all," said his mother. "See if he will have something sent up."

The study at the bank was a room at the back of the house, approached from the main stairs by a long, dark passage. It was not the custom of any one in the house, save the master, ever to enter the room, except in the morning, when Kate herself superintended the dusting operations, and made it her care that none of the papers should be disturbed.

Mr. Melliship entered his room, and turned up his lamp. Sitting down before the fire, he opened the book he had been reading, and read over again the story of Lord Castlereagh's suicide. As he read, his face grew haggard, and his cheeks pinched.

Then he pushed the book from him with a sigh, and opened a cellaret at his elbow, whence he drew, with a little hesitation of manner, a bottle of brandy and a glass. As he was taking out the cork, he heard Frank's footstep in the passage. He had just time to put back the bottle, and to resume his seat, when Frank's knock at the door was followed by his entrance.

"Come in, my boy," said Mr. Melliship, "come in. You find me very busy."

"I am come to be of use, sir."

"That, Frank, you cannot be to-night. And so, if that is all, and I cannot help you, leave me to silence and work."

"But you are not well, my dear father."

"I am not, Frank," he said sadly.

"Will you see a doctor to-morrow?"

"I have seen Dr. Kerby to-day; and he

prescribes what I hope you will help me very soon to take — a long holiday. But I cannot begin it just yet. And so good night, my dear son."

With that explanation — something, at least — Frank retired. As soon as his footsteps had reached the end of the passage, Mr. Melliship drew out the brandy bottle again, and filled his glass. As he held it to the light, a look of weariness came across his face. He put it down untasted.

"What is the good?" he muttered. "It brings stupefaction; but what is the use of stupefaction? It brings hope; but what is the use of hope? It paints the future bright, when the future is all black and gloomy. Good God! can I not find strength enough to meet my fate? At least, let me do what I can, and write to the accursed man who pulls these strings that are strangling me."

He sat down to the table, and took his pen.

"MY DEAR MORTIBOY, — It is in your power to relieve me of all my embarrassments, or to" —

And here he stopped; because between his eyes and the paper on which he was writing there seemed to fall a cloud, and his brain was turned. His face dropped into his hands, and he groaned aloud. The clock ticked on, but he sat there motionless. Presently he lifted his head, with a heavy sigh, and looked around furtively. What was it he saw, that on his brow there stood beads of perspiration, that his cheeks were blanched with terror, that his eyes were starting from his head.

The table at which he wrote was in the centre of the room, his back to the fire. He sat on one of those wooden chairs which revolve without the trouble of lifting them. As he turned, and looked straight forwards, there was the fire burning brightly and cheerily; there was the mantle-shelf, with all its dainty decorations, and above it the large oil painting of his children at four years and six, — of Kate and Frank.

Was there nothing else? To us, had we been there, there was nothing. Thus, as the harmless rustic passed the pool where Diana and her nymphs were bathing, he saw nothing, because nothing was to be seen. Presently Actæon comes along and with the glimpse of that other world he loses his perception of the present. So, too, when the Arcadian shepherd piped upon the mountain-side, the gods, Pan and the Dyrads and the Fauns, sported and revelled about him, and he neither heard nor saw. But to some luckless one — some dweller among cities, some poet whose brain is drunk already with the wine that he finds in the chambers of imagery —

great Pan himself appears in all his terrors; and then the brain reels and totters, and the poor poet speaks never more coherent language.

So the banker, leaning forward, was face to face with an apparition from the other world.

"Woman," he cried, stretching out his hands in helpless agony—"dead woman—why do you haunt me?"

It was the woman he had gone to bury that very morning,—Susan Mortiboy, his old playmate, his first love. She stood—or seemed to stand—before the portrait of his children, and held out her hands before the canvas, as if to protect them. A tall, thin figure, with a worn and sad face, full of the sweet and passionless tenderness which comes of a life spent wholly for others, and ignorant of that human love which makes, at one time in their lives, all women selfish who are loved.

"Why?" cried Mr. Melliship. "Why?"

Her lips, as he thought, moved; and, though no sound came forth, to him she seemed to speak, but only echoed back the terror of his heart.

"The time of success is past—the time of ruin is at hand. Be strong to meet your fate."

"Strong?" he cried. "But how—but how?"

And then the bloodless lips parted again, and the words which were not uttered floated across his brain,—

"Be strong to meet your fate!"

"O Susan!" he murmured, "do not mock me. This is now the second time. The first time was on the night you died, and then you told me what you tell me now. Great God of heaven! have you nothing more to say? To be strong—to let the ruin come—to be able to do nothing—to smile and pretend to resignation! Yes; but what is that of avail to help my children? Yes; and to save my own honor? Show me a way! show me a way!"

The time for the help of saints has gone. Susan Mortiboy a sainted and holy woman, had, it seemed to him, no advice to give; for the figure before his eyes was silent, still, and motionless. It spoke not; but it looked steadily in his face, while he gazed fixedly forwards, as one in a mesmeric trance.

And presently, as it seemed, the figure moved from the front of the fireplace to the side, and turned to the picture of the children. whither followed the eye of their father. All the deep affection of his nature, all the keenness of his anxiety, all the bitterness of his terror, were concentrated in that gaze.

The features of the children faded away,

and Mr. Melliship looked through the portrait again to see his own drawing-room. By the fire sat his wife, asleep over her work; at the other end of the room his son and his daughter, talking in whispers. O death!—O life!—O joy!—O sorrow!—so far apart and yet together! The father, with his spectral guest, with his breast racked and tortured, and torn; the son with his sister, but two rooms away, talking lightly of love and hope and pleasure.

"O Kate," whispered Frank, so that his mother should not hear, "if you knew how I love her."

"So do I," said Kate. "Not as you do, silly boy; because I know she is not an angel at all—not a bit more than I am."

"And do you really think she loves me?"

"Why of course she does. I have seen it for months."

"But how—O Kate!—how could you have seen what I have hoped to tell you so long?"

"By ever so many little things—by signs and tokens—by things that men are too stupid to see. It must be a great misfortune to be a man," said Kate sententiously.

"Not at all," replied her brother; "because, if I were not a man, I should not have fallen in love with Grace Heathcote, and you would not have had the pleasure of helping me in my difficulties."

"I don't believe you will have any difficulties, only you imagine obstacles that do not really exist. But I am not going to talk this nonsense any longer. Come, let us sing our duet, and then we will go to bed."

Stories are told of men who have heard conversations hundreds of miles away. They may be true or false; but here was Mr. Melliship hearing a whispered talk that took place under his own roof, only two rooms distant from him.

But, as he listened and looked, a cloud floated over the picture, and it became once more the picture of two children playing.

The figure that turned its face towards him seemed to be weeping.

"Why," said the banker, "does all that I do or hope for turn to disappointment? You told me years ago, Susan, of my indolence, my vacillation, my love for making things pleasant, and smoothing over difficulties. You alone knew my nature, because you loved me, unworthy as I am. Yes, you loved me; and once I loved you. Would to God that you had been with me always.—a protector from my evil genius, the best mother to my children that they or I could have had. And now you come, when the game of life is played, and I have lost, to mock me

with words that mean nothing. Susan, is this well done?"

She pointed again at the picture.

He looked, and saw a very shabby, ill-furnished room. It was in a great city, for there was a never-ending rumbling of wheels outside; it was in a crowded part, because you could hear them passing and repassing beneath the window: it was in a poor part, because you could hear the cries of those who vended their wares and hawked their goods about the streets.

In the room, lying on an old horsehair sofa, was his wife. By her sat Kate — his golden-haired Kate, the darling of his heart, his softly nurtured and tenderly cherished daughter, in a worn black dress, in mourning — God of heaven! for whom? — bathing her mother's temples with water. And in the window, catching the last light of a winter day, Frank bending over some work.

"Be strong! But how? O merciful Lord! must it come to this?"

The gray dawn of the February day breaks through the blind of Mr. Melliship's study, where the lamp has long since spent itself, and gone out. The light prowls round the room furtively. There is nothing in the room. It gets stronger, and looks again. There is a sitting figure in a chair. There is a painting over the mantle-shelf, wherein two innocent children are laughing upon the white face that looks up on them: and there is nothing else. No figure of a dead woman, moving clay-cold lips and parting the folds of a shroud to tell of coming danger; no voice from the grave; no phantom of a disordered brain; for the brain has passed through the troubled stage of disorder, and has settled down again into brightness. The brightness of insanity. Mr. Melliship is mad at last; and is waking again, with all this night forgotten, and only one idea left to act upon. On the brink of ruin, which yet might have been averted if his brain were only clear, he has the delusion that he is rich — immeasurably rich!

CHAPTER V.

On the Thursday morning, Dick Mortiboy went up to town to see the "partner" of whom he had told his father. "Meet me," he wrote to him, "at Euston, in time for the two o'clock train." At ten minutes before two there arrived on the platform of the terminus a thin, slightly built man, who began pacing up and down, and irritably glancing every moment at his watch.

He was about forty years of age. His closely shaven cheeks were sallow and

pale, save in the part where a beard should have been, and this was of a blue-black. His hair — worn close and short — was black and straight. His features, at first sight, appeared to be delicately and clearly cut; looked at more closely, it seemed as if the lines, skilfully designed, had been roughly executed — much as an engraver spoils a drawing on the block. His eyes were small, bright, and set well in the head. His lips were thin and mobile; and his chin was long, nearly straight, and very sharp. Now, persons with long straight chins are not unfrequently remarkable for tenacity and obstinacy. What constitutes a look of cruelty? I cannot define it. But Mr. Richard Mortiboy's partner and friend had it, distinctly and unmistakably.

Looking at him for the first time, a sort of shudder ran through you; and though after-acquaintance might remove the dislike of first thoughts, a secret suspicion was always awakened in men's minds whenever the name of Alcide Lafleur was mentioned. Not in Dick's it is true, because Dick had not a sensitive nature. He was one of that numerous tribe of mankind who are physically strong, and intellectually self-reliant and clear-sighted. It belongs to a timid nature to take fright at the sight of a stranger, — to see intuitively a certain friend in one man, and a certain enemy in another: to open out, like a sensitive plant, in presence of the first; to shut up and shrink, as the plant folds up its leaves and bends back its fibres recoiling, at the contact of the other.

M. Alcide Lafleur was irreproachably dressed, in a dark gray suit and black coat. His appearance proclaimed him a foreigner; but, when he addressed one of the guards, his accent was perfectly pure, and his English that of a well-educated gentleman — English, say, a little better than that we hear in the drawing-rooms of London, such as an American of the highest class talks.

The train came in true to time, and among the first to step out was Dick Mortiboy. The partners shook hands, and walked out of the station, taking a Hansom which passed along the road.

"Never take a cab from a station," said Dick, with the air of a man who propounds a new maxim in philosophy, "unless you want all the world to know where you are going."

"Where are we going?" asked his companion.

"Anywhere you like, my dear Lafleur, provided we have a quiet place to ourselves, and a talk. I've got a devil of a lot to say."

Lafleur shouted to the cabman through

the trap, and in a few minutes they were deposited on the pavement of Greek Street, Soho.

"A quiet house," said Lafleur, leading Richard in to it, "a house where donkeys of conspirators meet and devise schemes, which never come to any thing, for the upsetting of the world. I use it sometimes."

"Are you turned politician and republican?"

"Yes, to get their secrets, such as they are: poor things, when you know them all. But come in."

The house was externally the modest establishment of a *blanchisseuse*. Two or three Frenchwomen in clean, white caps, and faces which looked almost as clean and white, were ironing and folding before the window. One looked up as they entered.

"Tiens! — it is you, M. Lafleur. And monsieur is your friend?"

"It is I, madame," returned Lafleur, taking off his hat. "And monsieur is my friend."

"And charmed," said Dick, in French, "to make the acquaintance of madame."

"Let us have a room, madame, and a fire, and a bottle of brandy, and — and —"

"And a beefsteak, and a pot of stout, and a pack of cards," said Dick.

"You shall have them all, messieurs. Follow me, if you please."

She took them up stairs to a back room on the first floor, which looked out cheerfully on an old churchyard: a very pauper among churchyards — so green and grimy were the tombstones that should have been white, so black and bare the ground that should have been grass. Dick looked out and laughed.

"Here," he said, "is a lively and desirable locality to choose for one's own bedroom."

"Eh? What does it matter? I would as soon sleep in a churchyard as in a hotel."

"We have slept in one, my dear friend, not so very long ago, without experiencing any harm."

Lafleur laughed, — an uneasy, unpleasant laugh. It was this coarse-minded Englishman's chief fault that he was always making some reference to former unpleasantness.

Madame brought them, with a beaming face, a huge beefsteak from an adjoining eating-house, with the other luxuries they had called for; and, after putting them on the round table in the middle of the room, added, quite as a matter of course, and as if it were as much an accessory to the table as a saltcellar, an inkstand, pens, and a few sheets of paper.

Then she lingered for a moment, gazing

admiringly at the stalwart Dick, the handsomest conspirator she had ever entertained in her hotbed of treason.

"Monsieur brings good news?" she asked.

Dick looked at her, somewhat puzzled. But Lafleur answered for him, —

"Good, madame, but secret."

"I understand," she said. "I wish you success."

Then she retired, shutting the door carefully, and making as much noise as possible in going down stairs, in order to show that she was not listening outside.

"She thinks you are a messenger from the International somewhere or other," said Lafleur carelessly. "Let us get to business."

"Let us get to dinner," said Dick. "Good Lord, how hungry I am! Do you remember?"

"No, I do not. I remember nothing of the past. I wish you did not."

Dick laughed, and sat down to the table.

"Have some steak, Lafleur. No place like England for beefsteaks. Eat my friend — eat: that will refresh your memory of many things."

"Tell me how you are getting on," said his friend, taking a small piece.

"In the first place, I'm nearly starved."

"That I see," returned Lafleur.

"The old man is the same as ever, but shakier than he was. And now, attend carefully, because this will change all our plans. He has not only forgiven and forgotten, as he says, but he believes every thing I tell him. And he is going to be guided by all I advise, if only I play the cards well."

"Did you say any thing about the mines?"

"He won't listen to the mines."

"Did you tell him about the sunken treasure?"

"I tried it on last night; but he didn't rise as I could have wished. The fact is, Lafleur — Do have some more steak. No? Then I'll finish it."

He finished the steak before he finished his sentence. Then he pushed back his plate, drained the pewter too; and turning his chair to the fire, pulled out a pipe, filled it, and lighted it.

"My father always has his meals in the kitchen," he observed, — "it is a delightful custom, — so do I. We sit opposite to each other; and the old woman cuts the meat. The governor only eats a plateful, if it's hot, or a slice on a piece of bread, if it's cold: I do the same. I tell him it reminds me of my camp life, and that I like it. Queer, isn't it? And he believes me!"

Then he began to smoke a pipe.

"You forget my impatience, my dear Richard," said Lafleur softly.

"No, I don't. At night we sit opposite to each other, and I smoke my pipe, and tell him of my partner's skill and prudence; how we manage to get money; and how we've been hoarding it, and saving it, and grinding and screwing, to get more."

"Aha!" said Lafleur with a smile.

"Very well, sir. All this is to lay a foundation, and was exactly what we agreed upon. But, you see, the old man believes the talés to such an incredible extent, that we can do better; or, at all events, I can do better."

"What are you going to do? Dick, you're not going to throw me over, are you?" asked Lafleur, leaning forward eagerly.

"I think I am," returned the other coolly. "Look here. I come home with you. We've got our little pot. It is agreed that we shall make it out to be a great deal bigger than it is. I am to go down, like the Prodigal Son, to the old man: I am to say to him, 'Father I'm truly penitent for what I did.'"

"What did you do?" asked Lafleur.

"That's nothing to do with you, my Alcide. I am to repent and weep, and tell him that nothing but filial love brings me home again; that, and a desire to show him with my own hands what I have done. Very well. I am then to put into his hands the documents of partnership, and tell him all about the cotton. Eh? And then I am to propose to him a mortgage of our valuable estates, or a loan, or some means by which we can raise five thousand pounds, of which you are to have half. Is all that correct?"

"It is. Five thousand will do it."

"You are quite sure of your system?"

"Sure, Dick! Am I sure? What made our last pot?"

"Your system."

"What kept us afloat at San Francisco?"

"Your system still."

"Then you ask if I am sure!" said Lafleur, flushing to the eyes. "Dick, if I only had a dollar in the world, and was certain that I should never make another, I'd lump it all on my system. Give me only five thousand pounds, I'll break any bank in Europe; and then go to America, and break any bank there; and then we'll share the spoil!"

"Very well," said Dick coolly. "Now, I tell you what I'm going to do. I'll buy, and take to Market Basing to-morrow, all the things we agreed upon, and show them to the governor. But after that, I'm going on another tack. I'm going to see if I

can't stay there, and get more than a paltry five thousand. I'm going — don't you perceive? — to be a support to my father's failing age, my friend."

"Ah!" said Lafleur, in a tone which might mean a great deal.

"Yes. And I may possibly make him see that things will be carried on better with me than without me. But give me three months."

"And meantime?"

"I am quite certain, Lafleur, — quite certain: you know me? — that I can get you the money, one way or the other."

"One way or the other?"

Lafleur looked meaningly in his friend's face.

"Yes," said Dick, with a firm setting of his eyebrows. "It can be done, and I can do it. In three months' time you shall have your five thousand, and I shall either be a rich man, or else" —

"Else what?"

"Still a member of the firm of Lafleur, Roaring Dick, & Co., formerly respectable traders in San Francisco, New Orleans, the city of Cairo, and other places in the United States, and elsewhere in this populous and little-witted globe."

"I can live very well for three months," said Lafleur meditatively. "There is not much to be done, it is true. But there is something. I know a place or two already. And I still have a thousand left."

"You mean ~~we~~ have a thousand."

"Of course — of course."

"It is just as well, my partner, to be accurate. In this particular juncture it makes a little difference, because I want half of it to take back to Market Basing."

"What are you going to do with it there?"

"Don't you understand? I have seen my partner. He hands me a check on account. It is my share of the profits of one venture. Eh? And my partner is going to sail directly, to look after this year's crops."

Lafleur nodded.

"Where's the money?" asked Dick.

"In the bank. You must wait till to-morrow. Very respectable thing to have a banker's account, you know."

"Then let us go and buy the things we want; and, after that, we'll have a pleasant evening. Where am I to sleep?"

"Here if you like. Madame often makes up beds for her conspirators. You are not suspicious?"

"My dear Lafleur, when was I ever suspicious? Besides, look here."

He half opened his waistcoat. In a pocket on either side were two handles: one straight — that appertained to a bowie-

knife; the other rounded — that belonged to a six-shooter.

"You stick to old friends, then?"

"All old friends. My knife, and my pistol, and my Lafleur. But come, while we have daylight."

It was a singular collection of things that they brought home that night; and Dick spread them out on the table with an air of great triumph.

"Here's the cotton: the raw material out of which we make our great profits. Here's a photograph of the plantation. Looks devilish like, doesn't it? Here is the dark-skinned but impressionable and intelligent African; free, contented, and happy; hoeing with all the zeal and energy of a British pauper, all for love of Lafleur, Roaring Dick, & Co. Here are the feathers presented me by the Queen of Madagascar, and a map of the estate — wants a little touching up with a pen and ink — which her Majesty gave me. Here is my nugget, which I picked up in California — that's no lie, at any rate! — and was so virtuous as to resist the temptation of staying to pick up more, because I preferred a life of steady industry and religion to one of unsettled aims, uncertain prospects, in some wild spot, perhaps far away from any place of worship."

"Is the old man religious?"

"No," said Dick. "I forgot that. But somebody else is sure to be religious. Only I must be careful not to draw the long bow too much. Well, have I got every thing I want? The bowie-knife used by the wicked Yankee."

"Have you got the rough plan showing where the sunken treasure is?"

"Here it is. The same that the honest old bo's'n gave me, the day I relieved his wants out of my slender stock."

"I say, Dick, be mild. Yours is a very lively imagination."

"And here is a bit of silver ore from that mine which you and I know of, up in the Mexican mountains, which no one else knows of, and which we can get for a mere song. I've got them all. And now, Lafleur, here's the brandy, and here are the cards, and let us have a game. Upon my word, I don't think there's a single soul in all Market Basing that knows the game of euchre. The usual stake, I suppose?"

Each friend laid a small handful of gold on the table, and began. It was a curious feature about the play, that each kept an eye on his own, and one on the other's hand. Moreover, there was a sort of ostentation of integrity about them, as they sat with their hands well forward upon the table, and their cuffs pulled back, and shuffled, dealt and cut in a manner which seemed to

say, "You see how honest and simple I am?"

After playing till twelve, Lafleur rose — he had been winning slightly — and put on his hat. It was characteristic of the man that, though he had drunk nearly half the bottle of brandy to his own share, his face was as pale and his manner as quiet as before.

"Must you go? Then I will meet you at the bank to-morrow, and draw the money. Send up that Frenchwoman, will you?"

Madame came up. M. Lafleur had spoken about the room. It was in readiness. Would monsieur step up stairs?

Madame was a bright little body of about five and twenty, not uncomely in features, and clean of appearance. So Dick — who had an eye to beauty — invited her to sit down, compounded her a glass of brandy and water, and entertained her by a few descriptions — drawn from that boundless store-house, his own imagination — of Eastern scenes, and the places he had seen. After an hour's relaxation, he went to his bedroom.

There was neither lock nor bolt on it; and Dick noticed, with a little suspicion, that it opened outwards. This gave him no means of protection at all, and he carried about with him a largish sum in valuables and money. But he was a man of boundless resource. He drew a piece of string from his pocket, undressed, tied one end to his great toe, and the other to the handle of the door. Then he placed his pistol and knife under the pillow, and got into bed.

"Ho! ho!" he laughed. "If they open the door!"

CHAPTER VI.

It is the duty of the historian, painful though it sometimes be, to preserve impartiality in the description of his characters; neither, on the one hand, to be so far blinded by admiration of a hero's virtues as to forget his faults; nor, on the other, to visit his errors with so heavy a displeasure that any gleams of virtue may be quite overlooked and forgotten. In obedience to this rule, it is incumbent upon me to state plainly, what has already been intimated, that Richard Mortiboy the younger was by no means the manner of man that he wished to appear in the eyes of his confiding father. There was no cotton estate; there were no mines; there was no sunken treasure; there was nothing but a pocketful of money, gotten together by various shifts and devices more than questionable. And right in the

unsuspecting heart of Market Basing — as innocent a town as any in the guileless realm of England — there had been dropped, though not from heaven, one of the most unscrupulous, crafty, and thorough-going rascals that might be found in a long day's march, even by Ariel the rapid.

We, who write history, would fain have all our characters virtuous. How sweet and easy-flowing would be the years; how quiet and gentle the conversations; how empty of pity and terror the lives; and, oh, how bereft of interest would be our books! For when the villain ceases out of the land, and the voice of the tyrant is heard no more, history will cease too; because there will be nothing left to chronicle but the wooing of turtles. "The purpose for which snakes was built," writes an American natural philosopher, "is not yet explored." But here is doubtless one reason why rogues and rascals were constructed, and why villainy and roguery are allowed to prosper, — to furnish material wherewith the historian is enabled to point his moral and adorn his tale.

It was now twelve years since a certain cold wild night in November, when, about nine o'clock, Mr. Mortiboy, senior, followed by his son, — then a tall stripling of eighteen, — walked down that dark passage in the house which we know, and opened the door. The wind blew in, and the rain was pouring down. The father was trembling with passion: the son cold and stolid. Mr. Mortiboy pointed to the darkness, and said, in constrained, hard tones, —

"Go. Darken my doors no more. You are no longer my son."

His son said nothing; but looked up and down the street as if inspecting the state of the weather before taking a walk.

"Go," repeated his father.

"One may as well first put on a great coat, on a night like this," returned the boy coolly. "Had you not better shut the door, father, for fear of catching cold, while I delay you for one minute?"

His father took no notice, but stood steadfastly gazing at him. The young man, taking his time to get comfortably into the great coat, selected his umbrella from the stand, and put on his hat. Then he took out his purse and looked at it.

"You must give me some money," he said.

"Write to me from London, and I will tell you what I will do for you. Now, go. Your aunt shall not know why."

Two days later, a letter came from London, containing nothing but young Mortiboy's address. To this the father replied

by a ten-pound note, without a word of forgiveness or of blame; and from this time all correspondence ceased, and Dick Mortiboy's name was no more mentioned in his father's house.

It was understood vaguely that he had "done something."

The young man, with his ten-pound note, and five or six pounds besides, which he got by selling his watch and chain, went to the docks, and looked for a ship about to sail — whither he cared not. What he wanted — for very special and cogent reasons of his own — was to get away at once, and never to come back again at all.

He found one clearing out, with her cargo on board, her papers ready, bound for Palmiste Island, and going to sail the very next day. He took a second-class passage for ten pounds; getting a half-promise from the purser, that, if he made himself useful on the voyage, he might have some of the ten pounds returned on their arrival. And a few days afterwards young Mortiboy was sailing merrily across the Bay of Biscay, his cares all thrown to the winds, delighted at the prospect of seeing the world, and getting away from the difficulties and debts which had driven him to — convey, the wise call it — imitate his father's signature so carefully, with all its dots and flourishes, that not even the bank clerks could tell that it was not the genuine autograph of Ready-money Mortiboy.

He did more than make himself useful to the purser — he did all his work for him; and that so easily, lightly, and well, that the ship's books were never better kept. The purser showed his gratitude. He not only bestowed a daily ration of grog upon him, — which was really a delicate attention, — but he persuaded the skipper to enter him on the books as purser's clerk; to give him back his passage money; and when the ship, after her three months' voyage, was tugged into the harbor of Port Dauphin, in the Island of Palmiste, to present him with a trifle besides, by way of acknowledgment. And then, when Dick had refused an offer to be taken back again in the same ship, still as clerk, his patron sent him to a business house in the town, with a recommendation to the effect that Mr. Mellon — as Dick called himself — was a young man of excellent business habits, and respectable connections. The latter clause, being put in as likely to help, was certainly not a greater untruth — although the purser knew nothing whatever about his relatives — than is told a thousand times a day by people who write testimonials alike for the deserving and the undeserving poor.

The recommendation was accepted as

sufficient; and Dick found himself on what seemed to him—he had never before drawn more than a pound a week—a princely salary of one hundred and fifty pounds a year, in one of the best business houses of Port Dauphin. His hours were not long; and he had his day, after four o'clock, entirely to himself. Now, this was the unfortunate part of it. From four to six—that is to say, in the cool of the evening—one might stroll under the trees; one might climb the hills—though this was hot work—or one might sit down and do nothing. At six, just as the sun went down, came the table d'hôte, which brought you well on to seven. And here Dick—whose income was not much more than enough to find his breakfast and dinner, and pay the rent of the little wooden box he slept in, for which he paid a pound a month—ought to have ended his day, and gone home to bed. Unfortunately there was a billiard-room in the hotel; and he found it pleasanter to smoke his cigar—cigars even at a half-penny a-piece, the current price in Palmiste, mount up—than to go home to his dreary room, and go to bed. Added to which, the younger Mortiboy had the eye of a Roberts for billiards. So he used to play, and to make his little pot every night. Then the descent of Avernus, which had been checked by the voyage out, began over again. For to billiards was speedily added brandy and soda; and not unfrequently, as the weeks passed on, a little game at écarté, where his winnings at billiards were generally transferred to his opponents' pockets. Presently these proceedings coming to the ears of his employers,—respectable and, considering all things, even God-fearing merchants,—it was not astonishing that Mr. Mellon received one morning a polite but firm intimation that his services would not be required after the end of the current month. But Dick again fell on his feet. In Palmiste are coffee and sugar estates; and among the planters who sold their sugar to Dick's employers was an old Englishman, who had been struck by Dick's handsome face and his frank manner. Learning that he was without employment, he offered him a place on his own estate, where his sole business would be to pay the coolies engaged for the canes, look after their rations, and keep the accounts. And he bargained to give him, over and above a house and allowances, fifteen pounds a month hard cash. Dick accepted the offer with joy, and went down to the Hautbois estate with the delight of a schoolboy. For it was characteristic of this young man, that no sooner was he out of a scrape than all his good spirits returned to him.

For some months all went well. Hautbois was at the other end of the island, some forty miles from the town of Port Dauphin. There were no billiards, no écarté, and no loafers about hotel verandas, ready to propose or to accept a brandy and soda, on the slightest possible pretext. It is true that there was no society; but he had work during the day, and was sufficiently tired at night to go to bed with pleasure at nine o'clock. Hautbois stood ten miles away from any other house: an estate cut out of the virgin forest, which here sloped down to the very seashore, until it merged into the mangroves, where they grew standing thickly together, with their unwholesome leaves, and their long, slimy roots—the nursing places and cradles of the young sharks, who disported themselves about the tendrils in the shallow water in all the innocence of childhood. Round the estate lay the deep silent woods, where there were no birds, because the monkeys ate the eggs, or the hurricanes blew the nests away out to sea. Away in the glades, you came upon deer that were only frightened at the sight of man for twelve weeks in the year, during the shooting season,—a periodical time of misery, whose approach they yearly expected with terror, and saw themselves safely passed through with a lively gratitude. Wild and fearful beasts there are none in Palmiste. Unlike most of the other West Indian Islands, it has no snakes; and with the exception of a centipede or so, a big spider of ferocious and blood-thirsty build, and a few scorpions, there is nothing in all Palmiste to scare a girl. To the north rose the mountains, tall and wooded. And over all these lay the bright, soft blue, never hidden by fog, seldom by cloud, with a warmth which got into the bones, and made one lazy and thoughtful, and inclined for rest: an air which makes men good, because it is too much trouble to be any thing else. Here for a while Dick was happy. Mr. Oswald, his employer, asked him to dinner; talked about England, and the old days when he was a young man, and George the Third was king; told old stories of his Oxford life, and of the princes and their wild doings; and surrounded the young man with a pure and peaceful atmosphere, which made him for a while look back on his past with shame and regret. And then old Mrs. Oswald took a fancy to him; made him come and talk to her when her husband was up in town; inquired into the condition of his wardrobe. This was scanty; Mr. Oswald made it plentiful; saw that his little house was properly furnished, and made comfortable for him; and instructed him in the best way of dealing with his Indians.

His duties took up about three hours in the day. Then he would go over to the mill, and watch the sugar-making. By degrees he grew expert at this, as in any thing which he took up; and Mr. Oswald added another five pounds a month to his salary, and made him one of the mill superintendents. On Saturday he had to overlook the distributions of rations to the men. On these days, there was a great scene round the storehouse over which he presided as the Indians came, accompanied by their wives and children, to receive the weekly dole of rice and grain and salt-fish. It was then that Dick—who loved nothing so well as to command and administer—was in all his pride. He learned to talk Hindostani, and achieved a reputation—easy enough, but not entirely without its merits—of being able to swear as hard as any coolie of them all in his own tongue.

Dick ruled them with a rod of iron.

Standing over his stores and his accounts, with his long, thin figure, his flashing eye, his ready hand,—which many an Indian remembered as being heavier than most of those he had encountered,—and above all, his ready tongue, he was at once the terror and the admiration of the shrinking crowd which gathered around him, and received, in such silence as was compatible with their stage of civilization, the weekly allowances.

So Dick's days passed pleasantly away, and the memory of the past troubled him little. Came presently the hunting season, when Mr. Oswald gave his great parties. To these the young accountant was asked, and discovered other talents. For the eye which had been chiefly trained at a billiard table was found the truest of any with a rifle, and the most of the honors of the hunt, fell to young Mellon, of Hautbois estate. He could ride, too, because he belonged to a riding country; and many were the mounts he had got as a boy from his cousin Heathcote or his uncle, Mr. Melliship. So it came about, that, in spite of his inferior position,—one generally held by mulattoes of the island—young Mellon began to be known as a gentleman of a station not contemptible, and manners which belonged to a higher grade. And since no one is satisfied to recognize a man as a friend till a coherent and intelligible story of at least ten years of antecedents has been made out about him, it was whispered abroad that young Mellon was one that had quarrelled with his father, a man of colossal fortune, and had run away. This was spread abroad so industriously that it ended by being received as gospel, and Dick found all doors open to him.

No harm was done so long as he remained at Hautbois, or only went about to

the neighboring estates. In these visits, he made the acquaintance of the young ladies, who led lives as dull as ditchwater in their secluded homes, and were delighted to get some one, if only an employee on an estate, to talk to. And such an employee!—a mysterious stranger with the manners of a nobleman; a tall and graceful youth of twenty, with all the beauty of a hero of romance, all the possible passion which lay undoubtedly hidden under black curls and splendid eyes, and a little dark moustache, and a cheek which had hardly yet forgotten how to blush. And so the fame of him went up even to the great and important city of Port Dauphin; and when the races came, and the governor gave his ball, and the garrison theirs, and the bachelors theirs, and there were dinners every day, and dances when there were no balls, interest was used to get Mr. Mellon cards of invitation; and he, too, with Mr. and Mrs. Oswald, went up to town to enjoy himself.

We cannot, historians though we are, linger over this most fatal week. Dick had been six months with Mr. Oswald. It is easy, therefore, to calculate how much he had saved, at the rate of ten pounds a month. With this in his pocket, he took a chamber at the hotel for the week of the races, and prepared to be happy. Everybody liked him: the young ladies because he was young and handsome, and danced well, and looked like a chevalier; the men because he was never ill-natured, never in the way, never in the least snobbish,—a thing which could not always be said of the Palmiste bachelors,—and because he would sit up all night, sing a good song, and play a game at cards when the dancing was over. This little game of cards it was that brought him grief; for Dick went back at the end of his week with a sorrowful heart, and fifty pounds to pay in the course of the next month—a debt of honor. He was profoundly miserable. Among all his acquaintances he had not one friend; there was not a soul in all Palmiste to whom he could have gone for the loan of a ten-pound note, except old Mrs. Oswald. If only the young man had poured out his troubles to her, all would have been well with him. For the heart of the childless old lady yearned to the bright and handsome lad, who might have been her own son, and who looked so innocent and happy.

But Dick had already plucked the fatal apple which brings man to grief. That is, he had passed the portals which leads from innocence to guilt, and, having passed through it once, found little difficulty in going through again. "*Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute*:" the brave who can num-

ber his hundred murders has almost forgotten the terrible heart-sickness that came upon him when he committed the first.

In the month the debts were paid, and Dick freed from all his difficulties. He went on with his duties, but he looked pale and harassed. Mrs. Oswald used to ask him if he were ill, and made him dine at the house oftener, thinking, in her kindness, that he wanted society. And her husband offered him a holiday at Port Dauphin for a fortnight, if that would do him good. But Dick shook his head, tried to look pleased, and declined.

Thus two or three months passed away. One day Mr. Oswald received a letter, which he read with perplexity. He had his horses put in at once, and drove away to town. Mr. Oswald did not come back that night. That was nothing unusual. But he came the next day, accompanied by two men, whom Dick knew, when he saw them, to be inspectors of police. As the carriage drove up, he was crossing the open space between the mill and his own cottage. Why did he stop, and turn as if for flight; and then, trembling in all his limbs, seem to lose in a moment all his pride and manliness, and crouch together as he continued his walk?

Mr. Oswald called him. The old gentleman was perfectly haggard with anxiety and terror. To look at him, you would have thought that he was himself the criminal whom the officers came to look for.

Dick tried to pull himself together. He succeeded to a small extent, and advanced with a conscious swagger to the veranda where his employer was standing.

"Mr. Mellon," said Mr. Oswald, "a very painful thing has happened. Some person has forged a check for fifty pounds, and the money has been paid. The forged check has been placed by the bank in the hands of the Crown Solicitor, and they — they — say it is you." He cleared his throat. "Of course, I am quite certain it is a mistake."

"Quite, sir," said Dick, with a nervous twitching at the mouth. "These gentlemen —"

He looked at the inspectors.

"We have to arrest you, Mr. Mellon."

"Oh! May I have a word with you, Mr. Oswald?"

The inspectors, in reply to a look of interrogation from the old planter, nodded; and Mr. Oswald led his clerk into the dining-room. As they came in at one door, Mrs. Oswald entered at another. Dick did not see her.

"I do not want to waste your time, sir," he said. "You have been very kind to me — more than kind; but the thing is true."

"What thing?" cried Mrs. Oswald.

"I am arrested for forging a check. It is quite true. I did it. You will not tell them in the court what I have told you, I am certain, Mr. Oswald. I gambled during the race week, and lost all I had and fifty pounds besides. How was I to pay it?"

"Why did you not ask me?" cried Mrs. Oswald. "O my boy! why did you not ask me?"

"I wish I had," said Dick ruefully.

"If you must forge some one's name," said Mr. Oswald, almost weeping, "why, in Heaven's name! why not have forged mine?"

"I wish I had," said Dick, looking at him with real emotion. "I wish to God I had!"

And while Mrs. Oswald cried and lamented, and the worthy old man, her husband, sat mournfully with his head in his hands, the young fellow went off with his captors, to be locked up in the jail of Port Dauphin. One touch of compunction — the only one for many years — visited his heart when he saw the grief of the good old couple.

CHAPTER VII.

It is not a pleasant thing, apart from the shame which every one feels except the true philosopher, to be clapped into prison in any climate; but it must be most unpleasant of all under a tropical sun. The absence of fresh and free air, and the deprivation of those small comforts which alone makes life in Palmiste tolerable, are of themselves enough to make a weak man commit suicide and a strong man go mad. Poor Dick sat, the first night of his confinement, on the stone couch which did duty for a bed in his cell, mournfully thinking over his chances; and speculating — for the case was far too clear to admit of any hope of acquittal — how long a term of imprisonment he would be likely to have. Then, with the elasticity of youth, he went on to speculate, further, what he should do when he got out. And presently, wearied with so much thinking, he lay back upon his grass mat and went to sleep till the sun rose, and shining in at his barred window, awakened him. He started up, and instead of his little room at Hautbois, made neat and comfortable by the care of Mrs. Oswald, he found himself in a white-washed cell, with a stone floor, and iron bars instead of green jealousies. The window looked into the courtyard of the prison, where some miserable

Latians, prisoners, were huddled together, waiting for the guards who were to take them to work. Presently his door opened, and a mulatto turnkey appeared, — a fat, merry-looking rascal, — who gave him the usual instructions as to the rules of the cell, and let him know that he was to be brought before the magistrate that morning.

Perhaps, in Dick Mortiboy's whole life, — which was chequered enough, and had its banyan days, — there was but one recollection to which he turned as seldom as he could, only one which caused him bitter shame and pain even to think of. It was the recollection of the dismal and degraded procession — of which he formed one — that filed out from the prison doors, and was marched solemnly down the street, *coram populo*, to the magistrate's court. It was headed by a brace of weeping Indians, charged with burglary and attempt to murder — they shed tears as they went, and howled their innocence; then three or four men who had been drunk and disorderly — these were the most shamefaced of the lot; then a negro, who pretended to laugh at the absurdity of the charge against him — he had been stealing ducks; then Dick, the bright handsome young Englishman walking along, red with shame and misery, with this crew; then a Chinaman, against whom something unlawful connected with other people's pork was alleged — he wore a surprised countenance, as one who should say, "Dear me! this is very singular — very singular, indeed! What can be the motive of this?" then half a dozen more Indians; and then the procession was closed by two policemen. A long string passed down the file, which every man had to hold with one hand. The Indian is quite contented so long as he keeps his fingers closed upon the string, and considers himself laden with fetters. If he is driven along loose, he runs away multivivous.

That dreary day! Many of his acquaintances — including the man for whom he had forged the check, who was the principal witness — were in court; and not one — not one of all the men with whom he had lived and drunk and sung — seemed to have a kind or pitying look. Dick tried to steel his heart, ineffectually, against the shame. It was bruised and seared by this day's misery, and it was long before it became again as it had been once — soft, relenting, charitable. Have you not noticed that criminals appear to have no sense at all of moral culpability? It is because circumstances, as well as repetition, deaden the feeling of remorse. Thus, when Dick forged his father's name, in the first

place, the consequences were sharp and decisive: secondly, they were not accompanied by any public shame; thirdly, he was in dire straits in the town, and only too glad to get out of Market Basing; and lastly, his father had always restricted his pleasures, and cut down his allowances to the merest pittance; so that he hated his home, and left it with delight. Now it was different: he had a chance in life, and he threw it away. He made friends, and he lost them. He got a certain sort of position, and he put himself out of it by his own act and deed. It is the public consequence of a crime that causes the remorse and agony of the sinner, not those hidden consequences which are unseen, yet perhaps more retributive, because they sear the heart, and paralyze the will.

The day came to an end at last, and the procession was re-formed to return, Dick being fully committed for trial at the next sessions, now some two months off. They pushed him into his cell, gave him his dinner, and left him to his meditations.

There are only occasionally in Palmiste prisoners of any social grade or rank above that of merchant-sailor or Indian coolie: but at this moment there was another prisoner, also awaiting his trial, — a young Frenchman, some few years older than Dick. At stated hours the prisoners were allowed to walk in the court-yard, between which and the main entrance was a strongly locked gate, opening into a sort of barrack-room, where policemen and guards were always about. There was also another entrance, by an iron door, never opened, which led into the chief gaoler's private house, and was designed as a means of getting into the prison without going through the guard-room, in case of a disturbance; and at the back of the court lay a large, bare room, open to it, which had been built for the prisoners as a place where they might work out of the sun when in-door work had to be done.

In this room, on the second day of his confinement, Dick, being released for his walk, saw a man sitting on the stone bench which ran round the four walls, and formed the only furniture. He started, for a moment changed color, and half turned to escape; only there was nowhere to go to, and he stopped; For the man he saw there was one of his old friends, — a man who used to dine at the same table d'hôte with him in Port Dauphin. He was a young Frenchman of the colony, — like himself, a merchant's clerk, and, like himself, a gambler; but Lafleur had already a reputation beyond his years. He was slightly built, and pale, with close black hair and a thick massive beard, like the Frenchmen

of the South. Dick knew him chiefly as connected with a card story in which he figured as the principal actor. The quarrel had been made up by a duel, in which Lafleur's opponent gave information to the police, and the combat was stopped on the ground. But men looked shy on him after this affair, and even in Port Dauphin, where public morality runs low, were chary of being seen much in his company.

The man started at the sound of Dick's step, and turned a haggard and careworn face to see who was coming. He rose, with a strange, constrained air, quite unusual to him, and half held out his hand.

"You are come to see me, Mellon? This is kind of you."

"I? No, by gad! You have come to see me. I am"—Dick turned red for a moment—"I am a prisoner."

"So am I," returned the other.

"You too? What have you been doing?"

"They pretend that I murdered young Deschamps."

Dick involuntarily recoiled. Then he laughed defiantly.

"They pretend I forged a check. Damn it!—they will pretend any thing. Only, I say, Lafleur, you're in a worse scrape than I am."

"Bah!" said the Frenchman; "it is nothing. In the first place it was a duel. I am innocent. And in the second"—

"Nonsense," said Dick. "What a fool you must have been."

"Well, there's no evidence."

Dick shrugged his shoulders, and sat down, glad enough to have a talk, even with a murderer. It will be understood that prison discipline in Port Dauphin is lax.

The days passed on. Lafleur grew more anxious. Only his lawyer came to see him; none of his own relations entering the prison. Mr. Oswald got a lawyer, too, who came to see Dick from time to time. But his visits did not tend to make the young man more cheerful: his spirits sank every hour.

One day Lafleur looked, for the first time, bright and even hopeful.

"What is it?" asked Dick. He felt particularly low that morning. "Hang it, man, if you were acquitted you couldn't look jollier."

"I see hope, my friend. I have a plan. We may escape yet."

"Don't see how."

"Listen."

He took Dick's arm curiously, before he began to speak, and felt the biceps. Now, Dick was strong-limbed and muscular, besides being tall.

"My faith! my friend, if I had your strength"—

"Go on, man—go on."

Lafleur looked round. No one was in the court-yard except a couple of policemen, whose backs were turned. He drew a key from his pocket, and furtively showed it to Dick.

"It is the governor's own key—the key of the iron door."

Dick nodded, and said nothing.

"The mulatto jailer got it for me. He is my father's son."

"Your brother?"

"Pardon me—I said my father's son. Now listen. It depends on you. At six, we have to go up to our cells. Who always conducts us?"

"Pierre, your—your friend, and Smith."

"Just so. You will have to floor Smith. Pierre will be managed by me without any trouble. It is all squared with him."

Dick looked thoughtful.

"Smith's a big man; but I think I can tackle him. Are we to wait till six? O Lafleur! why did you tell me so soon?"

The day was interminable.

Slowly the leaden-footed hours crept away.

From two to five they were locked up.

At five they were let out for another breath of fresh air; and Dick's heart beat fast as the hour approached.

The clock struck a quarter to six. The sun was already setting behind the mountains, and in a few minutes it would be dark.

Presently, making a great jingle with his keys, Smith, a ponderous Englishman of sixteen stone, followed by Pierre, came through the large gate. According to custom, stopped to lock the door behind him, and leisurely crossed the yard to the work-room. Dick held himself at the inside of the door.

"Come," said Smith, standing at the door, "time's up. Where's Mr. Mellon?"

He was looking straight into the room, where Lafleur was standing, motionless and trembling.

"Here," cried Dick, striking him full in the temple with his fist. Smith reeled, and would have cried for help; but another blow, from the left, knocked him with his head against the corner of the stone bench, and he fell, senseless and bleeding.

He was stunned.

Lafleur rushed out, followed by Dick. They had forgotten to knock down poor Pierre, who waited stupidly: standing still to be despatched with such a blow as had felled the gigantic Smith. To his astonishment, they had opened the little door,

and were gone without giving him so much as a tap. Now, he had specially signified a strong desire to receive from his affectionate half-brother exactly the same treatment as that designed for Smith. They had disappointed him.

A single passage led through the governor's house to his garden in front. There was no one there. They passed across, and stood without—for the moment, free.

Outside the door, in the road, but to the left of them, was a small knot of policemen and jailers, idly talking and enjoying the cool breeze of the evening. Lafleur touched his companion lightly on his arm, and they stepped to the right. Another turn brought them to a by-street. It was now quite dark, for there is no twilight in latitude 8°; and fortunately there was no moon.

"Where now?" asked Dick breathlessly, wondering what was the use of liberty in a place where there was nowhere to hide.

"Follow me. It is all arranged. If only we can find the boat."

Dick began to understand a little; and they walked quickly along the narrow streets of the Indian quarter, where they were likely to meet Europeans who might know them.

They passed no one, a stray Indian or two excepted, and in ten minutes were out of the town and on the high road.

Here it ran across a bare and rocky plain, which stretched for a mile or so from the sea-shore. Lafleur led the way still, and now began to run. No one was ever on the plain, by day or night. They reached the shore. The sea was calm and smooth, save where, a quarter of a mile out, the breakers of the coral reef shone clear and bright as they rolled in, and formed their long, white crests like a fringe round the shore, or like a bulwark to protect the island they loved so well. But the two were in no mood for similes or sentiment.

"What the devil are we to do next?" said Dick.

"See this white post? It is a landmark. We are to keep in a line with this and the fort"—

"But I can't see the fort."

"I know the direction: it is exactly over there—and they will be off the reef. It is all arranged, I tell you. Can you swim?"

"Can I walk?"

"Then follow me."

It was low tide—the sea, as well as every thing else, seeming to favor them. They stepped into the water, keeping as well as they could in the line along which

they had started. This was not easy, for it was quite dark. They slipped and fell. Now their feet would catch in a branch of coral. Now they would step upon a large sea slug—a bloated worm, two feet long—into whose miry body their heels would crush and sink, conveying a horrible sense of danger and misery; now a hole in the coral, and they would be up to their armpits. But they struggled on in silence, and at last stood close to the very edge of the reef, and peered eagerly into the darkness. The crash of the waves was all that they could hear. The white breakers rose higher than their heads, and they could see nothing beyond them. Worse, they could hear no sound of oars or oarsmen.

"Where are they?" cried Dick, almost breaking down at last. "Good God! have you brought me to this horrible place to look for a boat in darkness like this?"

"Better to die here than to be hanged. Remember, it was you who killed Smith."

Dick said nothing; standing, shivering in the water up to his middle.

For nearly half an hour, they thought it half the night, they stood so: silent, washed by the waves. The tide was rising, and they would shortly have to choose between wading back or being drowned. But neither dared speak to the other.

Suddenly Dick caught Lafleur's arm.

"I hear voices! he cried. "Shout, man, shout!"

Lafleur listened with a sort of sob. Suppose it should not be his boat! But, no,—it was impossible that another boat should be off the reef in so desolate a place, and at such a time.

He shouted. There was no reply.

He shouted again; but in vain. Then Dick put his two hands to his mouth, and gave a cry that might have been, and I dare say was, heard on shore.

A hoarse sailor's call was the answer, followed by a shrill whistle. It sounded close at hand; but they could see nothing.

"All right," cried Lafleur. "Let us keep close together. Now!"

He plunged through the breakers and disappeared.

"Lord keep the sharks off!" thought Dick, and followed him.

Outside, a boat lay tossing in the roll of the Atlantic, the crew resting on their oars; all with their faces turned anxiously towards the shore. There was a cry near them, and they turned a light in its direction. In two minutes they were alongside the escaped prisoners. Dick, who was the first, clambered in over the stern, and sat in the bottom shaking and trembling. Lafleur was more exhausted. He seized an

oar, but had not strength enough to climb into the boat. They drew him over the side; and the next moment—for the lantern had been used to facilitate the business—a huge, black fin showed for an instant above the water, and then disappeared.

"It's a shark," said the man at the helm.

"I touched him with my foot," said Dick, his voice soft and shaking. "Good God! give me some brandy."

They gave him brandy, and he revived a little. Then they performed the same kind office for Lafleur.

The Frenchman pointed to Dick.

"He did it all," he gasped. "Without him I should never have succeeded. You must put him on board too."

The men murmured; but the helmsman stopped them.

"One man makes little difference. I will settle it with the captain."

Two miles from the reef, in the roadstead, lay a small schooner. The night was so dark that she could only be reached by her lights, and the men pulled unskillfully. But they got alongside at last; and the moment they touched, a rope was lowered.

"Captain," said the man at the helm, who seemed to be one holding authority, "there are two. You will hear from me at your port."

"Right, sir, right. Now then, gentlemen, quick's the word."

Dick clambered up. He touched the deck, and looked wildly round; for he almost thought it was all a dream.

The captain clapped him on the back.

"Come," said he, "this was bravely done. Where's the other?"

As Lafleur climbed the rope, the men in the boat shouted "Adieu," and pushed off.

The captain whistled, the sails of the schooner fell, and Dick felt her move. In half an hour they were in open sea, bound for the port of Havana.

The captain took them below, and showed them a small cabin, with a pair of bunks. He had, too, changes of clothing; and, though it was difficult to fit a man of Dick's height, it was something to be dry, even with six inches of leg between boot and trouser.

"No one of the sailors," said the captain, "knows any thing. We've only been in port two days, and none of them have been, ashore except the cook, and he's deaf. Mr. Lafleur, you're welcome, for your father's sake. And you, young sir, for any sake you like, whatever you have done.

Dick shuddered. What had he done?" The thought of the big turnkey, whose

black blood he had seen oozing out upon the stones, struck cold at his heart.

He held out his hand to Lafleur, and said with an emotion that had nothing simulated about it.—

"You've rescued me from that infernal place, and you stood by me in the boat. I swear to you, Lafleur, by all that I can swear by, that I will stand by you till the last. If I can help you, I will help you. If I can defend you, I will defend you. If I can save you in any trouble, I will save you. If I have any money, you shall have half, and more. If I have any luck, you shall have half, and more. So help me God!"

Lafleur took his hand in his, and pressed it, and said nothing. So was plighted between them the truth that made them partners for life.

Next day they were in the trade-winds, bowling merrily along; for the schooner was as fast a vessel as any in those waters.

"Who were the men in the boats?" asked Dick, as they leaned over the traffrail, after breakfast, watching the flying fish and the porpoises.

"The man who held the rudder-strings was my father; one of the others was my brother; the rest were my cousins. The whole thing was arranged by the lawyer, my cousin. Pierre got an impression of the key in wax, and made it himself. He's a clever locksmith. You see, it would hardly do to have a man in my position tried for murder,—though it was a fair duel,—and I knew they would do something for me, sooner or later."

"By Jove," said Dick, "you must be a devilish clever family. And suppose the shark had spoiled our little game! I wish I hadn't hit Smith so hard. He was a good fellow, after all. But it is deuced hard to regulate your stroke so as just to stun, and not to kill. It wants a lighter wrist than mine."

Smith, however was not dead, he was only stunned; and directly he came to himself, which was three minutes after the birds were flown, he staggered to his feet, and instantly collared Pierre, making a great roaring, because he felt too groggy on his feet to hold on long. Pierre lost his situation; and notwithstanding he made great protestation of his innocence, he was not observed to care very much about his *démission*, and applied his talents subsequently, with great success, to the trade of a locksmith. The last time I heard of Pierre, I was told that he had sent his two sons to England,—one to be made a barrister, and the other a doctor. They were smart fellows; and when they went back to Palmiste, refused to speak to their father be-

cause the poor man was colored. Now, this was ungrateful.

It would take me too long to follow the fortunes of Dick for the ten years which intervened between his escape from Palmiste and his return to England. He did, always with Lafleur and the captain, a little trade in black humanity, running in the fast-sailing schooner between Congo and some quiet creek in Cuba. And they never got caught. It was during this period that he grew his beard, and developed his former meagre proportions. Presently came the American war, and the game of blockade-running began. By this time the captain to whom the schooner belonged, was dead; and Dick and Lafleur, like the pirates of old, took quiet command of the craft, no questions being asked as to the approval of the skipper's heirs. And then, for a couple of years, a merry time. There is a port, little frequented by English ships, some few hundred miles east of New Orleans. There the adventurers found their market; and many a glorious run they had from Nassau, laden with contraband of war. But the pitcher, oftentimes taken to the well, gets smashed at last; and one fine morning, when the day broke, after a thick black night, a Federal cruiser was discovered only a mile away; and the tight little schooner, driven on shore, was broken up and destroyed.

But they had made by this time a pretty little sum between them, which was lying to their credit in Havana; and the catastrophe afflicted them but little. Meanwhile, in these long days and nights at sea, Dick had imbibed from his companion a large share of his gambling spirit. He was now, heart and soul, a gambler. How far Lafleur played fair or false, no one knows; but I think he never cheated Dick, in his worst moments. Their partnership was true; and though there was neither friendship, respect, nor affection between them, there was the mutual bond of self-interest, and it may have been a sentiment, an unseen fetter, — forged on that day when they braved the terrors of the reef, — which both felt, and both were either unwilling or unable to break.

Between '65 and '68 — the year of their home-coming — had been an alternation of reverses and victories, chiefly carried on at the gambling-tables of the Southern States and Mexico. They won, they fought; they lost, they fought. And it was Dick who — after a lucky night or two at New Orleans had pulled them out of the mire, and set them up with a handful of money — proposed to go over to England, and see whether any thing could be made out of the old man. There was no risk to speak

of. Long since, the escape of Mellon and Lafleur had been forgotten, or only remembered as a mysterious disappearance, in Palmiste. It had never been understood. The only ship which sailed from the port that day was a small schooner which had passed out of the port at three in the afternoon, and was said to have sailed before nightfall. The woods were searched, but in vain; and the police had finally given up the hopeless task of trying to find them. Moreover, who would now have recognized either of them?

And so they came to England, like the wild beasts of the forest, seeking whom they might devour.

CHAPTER VIII.

PARKSIDE, where the Heathcotes lived, was seated on a sunny slope, just outside the straggling village of Hunslope. From the windows you had a view of scattered cottages, a farmhouse or two standing sheltered by their rickyards, the church tower peeping over Lord Hunslope's elms, and, in the distance, the white turnpike road to Market Basing. John Heathcote's house was well named: the gravelled drive up to the door skirted one of the parks that surrounded Hunslope towers. The farmer's garden was six feet lower than the park; so there was a natural fence. The only disadvantage attending this was that once a year or so, a Southdown of his lordship's tumbled over into Mrs. Heathcote's flowerbeds. About which catastrophes, when they occurred, Mrs. Heathcote made more fuss than the sheep did. She was a born grumbler. She grumbled for self and husband: when it was wet, because it was not fine; when the sun shone, because the turnips wanted rain; when beef was dear, because corn was low; when the markets rose, because John had sold too soon; when they fell, because he had held on to his corn or his bullocks.

And she was infallible.

John Heathcote — as honest and sensible a man as ever sowed one grain in the hope of reaping twenty — farmed five hundred and thirty acres of land, good, bad, and indifferent. Three hundred and eighty acres were his own good freehold. The remaining hundred and fifty he rented of his neighbor, Lord Hunslope. Of the lot, but twenty acres came under the category of bad and indifferent. They served their useful purpose, if they did not pay their way: they gave Mrs. Heathcote good cause of complaint.

"What in the world your father wants to

go and pay forty-two shillings an acre for Church Marsh for, nobody but John Heathcote knows," she had said to her daughters and at her husband's a thousand times.

But her husband puffed his pipe in peace. She had pecked at him so long, he could not have digested his dinner without his usual dessert.

At Parkside, they dined at half-past two in the afternoon. Dinner was over, and they were sitting in their pleasant dining-room. The winter's sun was shining brightly in at the windows.

At one, Lucy sat with some tatting on her lap. Mrs. Heathcote, in her violet silk, at the other, lazily peeling a pear. The farmer was smoking his clean clay pipe by the fireside.

"What did he say, John?" asked Mrs. Heathcote.

She referred to Dick Mortiboy.

"I didn't see him."

"Didn't see him! I thought you said he was coming over to-day?"

"I saw your Uncle Richard."

"You said Dick was coming over this afternoon."

"I know I did. Your uncle said he was."

"Why didn't you ask him to dinner?"

"I did."

"It's a wonder you thought of it, I'm sure."

John Heathcote gave a grunt in acknowledgment.

"The last time that boy was here, he was brought in with a broken collar-bone."

"Broke it at Codgebroke Brook, on my old black mare. How that boy did ride!"

"When you mounted him. Riding your horses to death! I always said he'd come back like a bad shilling, if he only had time to do it."

"Your mother used to say she knew he was dead — didn't he Lu?"

"Sometimes she said she thought so, papa," said Lucy softly.

"I never had a lucky legacy in my life," sighed Mrs. Heathcote.

Her cousin Dick's return was a very bitter pill for her to swallow, but she had got it down.

"What did you want the boy dead for? You've got enough, haven't you, Lydia?" said her husband, rather angrily.

"He never was any good to himself or anybody else. I never counted on Uncle Richard's money though, for I felt sure he'd come back. Such scapegraces always do. What did they say about it, John? I suppose all the world and Market Basing know about it by this time!"

"Market Basing people know all about

it," said Mr. Heathcote. "They were all talking about it this morning."

"What did they say?"

"Wait till the boy comes, and see him for yourself. Where's Grace gone?"

"She has gone with Frank Melliship down to the church, to practise something or another on the organ for Sunday. They'll catch their deaths of cold in that church a day like this?"

"Who's gone with 'em to blow?" asked Mr. Heathcote.

"Silly Billy, father," replied Lucy.

She said this quite gravely. Silly Billy had been blower ever since she had known the church.

"Then I'll bet a new hat the greenhouse fire's never been lighted. I told him to light it."

Mr. Heathcote put on his hat, and went out to light it himself.

"I'm quite anxious to see Cousin Dick, mamma," said Lucy. "I wonder what he's like. Of course I don't recollect him a bit."

"You need not want, child."

"What a number of strange places he must have seen, and after living in a quiet little town like Market Basing! What a change for him! I should like to see foreign places, and" —

"Foreign fiddlesticks" said her mother?

"You shall go to Scarborough with us in the summer, if I can only make Dr. Kerby say you must. Then your father must take us."

"I wonder if Cousin Dick is married."

Her mother started.

"Married! of course not. In those outlandish places, who could there be to marry? Cannibal queens?"

"I don't know, mamma. I only wondered if he was married."

"Pare me another pear, Lucy, and don't be ridiculous. They keep very well; and I like a pear better than grapes, I think."

This accomplished general had been surprised by Dick's return. But she had formed her plans. He should be Grace's husband.

That was why he was not married.

"There is somebody on horseback, coming across the park, mamma," said Lucy, looking towards Hunslope Towers.

There was an undisputed right of way across the earl's park.

"Where, girl?" cried her mother hastily, joining her daughter at her window.

In the distance, there was a figure on a horse to be seen.

"It's your Cousin Dick; and Grace is stopping down at that church all this time. I wanted her to be back."

"Is it Cousin Dick, mamma? Whoever it is, he comes very slowly, I think."

"Yes; it's Dick Mortilboy. I know by the horse. It's that chestnut your poor aunt Susan used to drive. I know it by the blaze face."

"I can't see any white, mamma."

"My eyes are better than yours, Lucy. Put another glass on the table, as if we expected him. He's sure to drink some wine. And Lucy" —

"Ye: mamma."

"See if Mary is dressed. She went up stairs an hour ago. Pull the bell."

Lucy Heathcote carried out her mother's instructions, and returned to the window.

"Look at my hair behind, Lucy. It feels as if the braid was loose?"

"It's all right, mamma. Mamma, it is not a chestnut horse," said the daughter.

"Look. It is Lord Launton, I'm sure?"

"So it is. What's he coming sawneying over here about, I wonder? I thought he was at college. He was not at church on Sunday."

"Perhaps he's going into the village, mamma."

"Let's hope he is," said her mother.

But a minute or two afterwards, the heir of Hunslope Towers, and Mr. Heathcote, were seen going towards the stables together.

"If Grace and Frank don't come back before your cousin comes, I shall be very angry with her. I suppose your father will bring Lord Launton in."

"I dare say he will, mamma. Lord Launton never comes to ask papa a question without coming in." Then she added, "I think Grace took the cough stuff for Granny Worley in her pocket, and I believe she meant to take it round to her cottage."

"She never will go fooling all up the lane instead of coming straight home."

"Poor old granny's cough is dreadfully bad."

"Dreadfully fiddlestick! Let Silly Billy take it when he goes home. I've no patience with such nonsense!"

They heard steps in the passage. The matron smoothed her ruffled plumage. Her face beamed with smiles as the door opened, and in came Mr. Heathcote with Lord Launton.

He was a lad about twenty-one, light-haired, short-sighted, tall, and thin; shy and hesitating in his manner, with a little stammer. Mr. Heathcote was a tenant of the earl's; and this young lord, as a boy, had been accustomed to run in and out of Parkside, so that a visit from him had not by any means the social significance which Mrs. Heathcote would have wished to see in it.

"It's nothing, Mrs. Heathcote — really nothing at all," he stammered as he dropped

his hat in his effort to find a chair. "How do you do, Miss Heathcote? — I was passing, and I — I thought I should like to ask Mr. Heathcote's opinion about — but it is really a trifle — the horse Mr. Heathcote bought for me turns out to have a corn. I was afraid he might prove lame through it."

He was at Oxford, where he had the reputation of being a scholar and a poet; but he had not yet learned to hide those signals of confusion and distress which modesty and shamefacedness hung out continually upon his cheeks. A lad, for the rest, of high-born and generous tendencies, who read the tales of his ancestors' valor to profit, seeing that the virtues of self-sacrifice and duty are the modern substitutes for those old ones of bravery and strength; and knowing that with these the nineteenth century may be made as fair a battlefield as any chronicled by Villehardouin and Froissart.

A poetic youth, too, and a dweller in that cloud-land of rosy mist and shapeless castles where the future shines before the eyes of dreaming youth like a landscape by Turner — vague, glorious, and golden. In his own home, with a common-place and rather stupid father, and a mother always occupied with her projects and pet societies, there was no one with whom he could exchange ideas; and so he peopled the solitude with creations of his own brain, and wandered about the glorious old park which surrounds Hunslope Towers until every avenue of it was filled with the fanciful beings of his own imagination, and every glade was a scene of romance, exploit, and endurance. A foolish, fond, and silly way of passing the hours: an unproductive, unpractical, and wasted time, quite useless in these days of competitive examinations — detrimental to honor-lists — and only useful in after-life if, haply, when the fallow years are spent, the soil is found richer and stronger; if, haply, strength of will grows out of vague aspiration, and purpose out of hope.

Ronald, Viscount Launton, was twenty-one, the only son of an impoverished peer. He knew well — it was the bitterness of his life — that he was expected to raise the fortunes of the house by a good marriage. He had always understood this, from the day when he began to understand anything. And at first it did not seem to matter. But there came a time — and it comes to all alike — when he found himself a man; when he felt his sex; when his thoughts turned naturally, and by that noble instinct which it is the business of our civilization to divert or repress, to the love of woman. Chateaubriand, during his years of ado-

lesence constructed for himself an imaginary woman. One lent him her hair, one her eyes, one her figure, one her hands, and one her mind. This was fatal, because the woman of his dreams never came to him, and he spent his life looking for her. Ronald was wiser. He found one woman lovely enough, graceful enough, refined enough for a poet's idol, and set her up to be worshipped in that holy of holies, the heart of a pure man. He seldom spoke to her: he never told her that he loved her. She never guessed it. Their stations in life were different; for the idol of Lord Launton was Grace Heathcote, Farmer John's eldest daughter.

As the mother, so the boys; as the father, so the girls. A fanciful rule, and often enough proving itself by its exceptions. But in the Heathcote family, there was a refinement and delicacy of feeling about the farmer, in spite of his rough down-rightedness, which you might look for in vain in his wife. Mrs. Heathcote was essentially common-place — vulgar sometimes, ambitious always. Her daughters, who had been educated in London with their cousins, — other Heathcotes, of a higher social position than themselves, with whom we have little to do, — owed, doubtless, some of their refinement to culture and training. But training is only skin deep, and wears off like veneer. It was the hereditary quality that showed itself in them; the gentle blood of the Heathcotes, come down to them through long centuries of varied and chequered fortunes.

Lucy, the younger, now about nineteen, who had been the especial favorite of Miss Susan Mortiboy, seemed to have imbibed something of her cousin's deeply religious character. She was weakly, and often suffering; her face, one of those thin, pale faces, whose beauty is chiefly that of expression, but yet not without a beauty of its own, with its abundant wealth of rich brown hair, and large and deep brown eyes. A girl who seemed to have fixed her thoughts on things above this world; yet one who found none of its duties beneath her. John Heathcote loved his daughter Grace with a sort of passionate tenderness; but, when he thought of Lucy, it seemed to him as if his heart melted within him. Grace was the sun of his life; Lucy, like the moonshine, not so bright or so beautiful, but softer, sweeter, more holy. If Farmer John were to read what I have written, he would declare that it was all nonsense and romance. But it is true, nevertheless. Was Grace, then, beautiful really, or only beautiful in the eyes of her silent lover? Wait a moment.

Lord Launton has been sitting all this time, answering yes and no to Mrs. Heathcote's questions, and nervously wishing that he had not called. He stays about a quarter of an hour, and then, grasping his hat, he asks with a tremendous blush, —

"How is Miss Grace?"

And then he retires, stumbling over the door-mat, and walking off with one of Mr. Heathcote's whips instead of his own.

"I like Lord Launton so much, mamma," said Lucy. "What a pity he is so shy!"

"If he asked my girl to have him, I don't know that she should," thought Mrs. Heathcote. "They're so poor."

Lord Launton turned off along the lane which led to his father's park. A pretty, tree-shaded lane in summer, where black-berry bushes across the ditch sent trailing branches over the abyss, pitfalls into which the children fell in the autumn, and scratched themselves; where honeysuckles, too, twined about among sweet wild roses, and long foxgloves shot up in July; but now, in February, a dismal place enough, with its two frozen ruts, each a foot and a half deep, and the unrelieved brown of its hedgerows.

Two persons found, even on this cold afternoon, some pleasure in the scenery. They were walking slowly down the lane, side by side; and one of them, a girl, had her face bent downwards.

Lord Launton's cheeks flushed a deep crimson when he saw them. He half stopped, as if he would turn back, but changed his mind, and, making an effort, rode on with head tossed back, and a curious flash in his blue eyes. At the sound of his horse's hoofs, both looked up. He took off his hat, and held out his hand.

"I have just been to the farm, Miss Heathcote."

"Indeed, Lord Launton. Do you not recognize Mr. Melliship?"

His lordship began to stammer again.

"I — I — I — think we were at Eton together, Mr. Melliship; but you were in a higher form, and you can hardly remember me, I suppose."

Frank Melliship laughed.

"In any case, after five years, we can hardly be expected to remember each other. You are spending the vacation at the Towers?"

"Yes — yes — until I go back to Oxford."

Then Lord Launton left them, riding on fast to conceal his own agitation.

"Heavens!" he thought; "he is a man; and what am I, who cannot for five minutes preserve my presence of mind?" And then was miserable the whole evening,

with the feeling that he had made a visible fool of himself. Of course, he had done nothing of the kind.

Of the pair whom he left behind, the girl was taller than the average stature of her sex. Her warm winter dress, with its sealskin jacket and furs, was not so thick as to hide altogether the graceful lines of her admirable figure; nor could her thick veil altogether conceal the roses of her cheek and the brightness of her eyes — eyes with the clear brown tinge, the color of truth and loyalty. Nor could the dank and misty atmosphere of the winter's day take its gloss from the glorious brown hair, as profuse and as abundant as her sister's, which wanted no artificial helps to set forth its wealth. Grace Heathcote is so lovely, Lord Launton's boyish infatuation is easily understood; so lovely, that we seem to know what is passing in the breast of the young man who walks beside her. For a beautiful girl is a treasure — more priceless than any work of art — which makes every man long to call it his own; to envy him who has the happiness to dwell forever in the magic of her eyes, to revel in the sunshine of her love. We love them at random, and all for the sake of their beauty; we know not what may be the soul that lies beneath; we stake our life and happiness upon the chance, that, under so fair a form, God has given the world as fair a heart. We have an instinct — whether true or false, Heaven knows — that goodness and truth, and fidelity and honor, accompany beauty; that where the loveliness which moves our heedless natures is found, there also those things which make life happy when passion is spent are found also. If they are not there, we believe them to be; and so life goes on, and our love becomes our wife, and remains an angel still. Socrates treated Xantippe kindly, forgetful of the high spirits which had once carried her so far as to pour the basin of water over his head; the judicious Hooker rocked the cradle, doing his wife's work, while he was writing his "Ecclesiastical Polity," without a murmur; and the illustrious Dr. Johnson never ceased to mourn the loss of the painted old woman whom his fancy had endowed with the virtues of the celestials.

Grace Heathcote being a woman, was, of course, not an angel. But there were more than one who thought her so. Lord Launton, as we have seen; Frank Melliship, as we have to see; and, at a distance, George Ghymes — the sturdy bachelor of five-and-thirty, who had her in his heart, laid by like a pleasure to be enjoyed stealthily and in secret, and to be worshipped with the hopeless devotion of one

who battles for a hopeless cause — like a Communalist of Paris.

"You were at school with Lord Launton, and yet you have forgotten him. Frank?" asked Grace.

"He has been away whenever I was at home, and I have not seen him for five years. Do you often meet him?"

"This with the faintest tinge of jealousy.

"Oh, yes! very often. And I like him extremely. He used to come to Park-side when he was quite a little boy."

"So did I."

"Yes; and you used to break my dolls, and make me cry."

"But we always kissed and made it up again."

"Oh, of course! Children always do."

"Well, then, I wish we were children again."

Grace laughed.

"That you might destroy my dolls again."

"No."

Frank Melliship was silent again. It is not always easy to approach a difficult subject.

Grace took up the talk.

"And now you have really left Cambridge, and come to Market Basing for good; do you think you will be happy in such a dull place?"

"That depends on one or two things."

Grace did not ask what they were.

"There is something wrong about my father," said the young man. "Something seems to be worrying him. That will have to disappear first. He seems very well; but he is sometimes distraught, and returns answers showing that he has not been attending to the questions. And — well, we shall see?"

"And what is the next thing to make you happy?"

"A hope, Grace."

"But any man may have a hope. Then what is yours?"

"I hope to realize the dream I was telling you when Lord Launton passed us, and interrupted me. May I tell it you again?"

"Yes," said Grace, softly.

"Then stand still, for we are close to home, and listen again. I dreamed that a childish fancy was to be the settled purpose of a man, and that what I had thought of as a boy, was to be the only thing which could give me happiness when I grew up. I dreamed that what might make me happy might make another too. Grace, tell me if my dream was presumptuous. Tell me, my darling; for I love you!"

She put her hand in his, and looked him frankly in the face.

"You may hope, Frank, if it will make you happy."

"And you, Grace — can my love make you happy? My words have not offended you?"

This time she looked him full, without blushing; for she saw no reason for shame.

"Frank, nothing that you could say is able to offend me. Nothing will ever make me happy but your love."

For an answer, he lifted the veil from her face, and kissed her lips and cheeks and eyes and white brow. No one saw them; and the last ray of the early setting sun, as it shone out from the clouds for a moment before it sank, lay upon the pair, as if with the blessing of God.

Then Grace broke from her lover; and, laying both her hands in his for a moment, she turned the corner by the great yew-hedge, and fled into the house.

CHAPTER IX.

WE left Dick Mortiboy fast asleep at madame's the *blanchisseuse*, in Greek Street, Soho, at a few minutes past twelve, A. M., on Thursday morning — alone with his purse, his pistol, his bowie-knife; with the great toe of his right foot communicating with the handle of the door. But his ingenious device was thrown away. He was as safe in the second-floor chamber of madame's house as he would have been in the strong-room of the Bank of England. The people were honest; conspirators, not burglars, frequented the place.

Dick got up at half-past ten: breakfasted with Lafleur at eleven, at the Sablonière, on oysters, galantine, watercresses, black coffee, and the little glass of white brandy. Then came the time of business. He completed his cabinet of specimens, and touched up the map of his Madagascar estate. Dinner at seven at the Café Quatre Frères, just out of Leicester Square. Euclure till bed-time — winning instead of losing. On Friday, having completed his business in town, he took the afternoon train to Market Basing.

Saturday he walked abroad, and found himself famous.

His father had parted reluctantly from his long-lost son, even for a couple of days. Nothing but the urgency of Dick's London business reconciled the old man to his going.

When he came back after his short visit, old Ready-money showed more delight than he had done when his son came back, and first introduced himself after a twelve years' absence.

Then Richard Melliship Mortiboy was as a shadow.

Now "my son Richard" was a reality.

The old man showed his pleasure in many odd ways. He believed in Dick; he swallowed as gospel all he told him: his name was forever on his father's lips.

"Richard come back again to his old father. A credit to me. What things he's seen! Nobody here like him."

These were the things he said. And he would press his lean hands on Dick's stout sides a dozen times an hour.

The sense of touch assured him of his reality.

He walked from Derngate to the bank that morning with his father. It was market day, and the little town showed its wonted busy aspect, — an appearance it put on only once a week. Everybody stared at him as a wonder. People they passed on their way turned to look after old Ready-money and his newly-found son.

Dick's return was likely to be a wonder in Market Basing for more than nine days.

At the bank, Ghrimes and the old clerks welcomed him as the prince come back to his father's kingdom.

They bowed down their necks before the heir.

And Dick had a pleasure in their friendly recognitions, and greeted all whom he remembered in his most kindly way, graciously acknowledging the homage they paid him.

After an hour's talk with his father, he said, —

"It would be just as well if I looked up a few people to-day; and in the afternoon I shall go over to Hunslope, and spend the evening with the Parkside people, I think."

"Very well, Dick — very well. It's Grace's birthday to-morrow. Richard, I'm afraid Cousin Lyddy isn't very glad you're come back. She'd booked my money, and she might have had it, perhaps; for blood is blood, my boy. Where else are you going, Richard?"

"Well, father, I shall look up Uncle Melliship as well. I never had any grudge against him."

"Well — no, no. He is your uncle. But pride's going to have a fall, Dick — pride's going to have a fall; and peacocks' tails are going to lose their feathers."

"What do you mean, father?"

"Patience, Richard — patience. Not that I could help it if I would."

Dick did not question his father further.

The old man went off to the foundry, and his son spent an hour with Ghrimes. He showed himself so quick-witted, so ready and apt to comprehend, that Mr. Mortiboy's manager was startled.

"What a pity, Mr. Richard—what a pity you did not stay at home and be your father's right-hand man!"

"Perhaps I've done better by going abroad."

"Perhaps you have. You know best. Anyhow, stay now you have come back. Your father's not so strong as he was. At sixty-five, hard work begins to tell upon a man. And I will say this for Mr. Mortiboy, he has worked harder than any man I ever knew. As for pleasure, he doesn't know the meaning of it."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Ghrimes, he does know the meaning of it. Every man must have pleasures of some kind, or he dies or goes mad. You will do well to remember that, when you have to deal with your clerks. My father's pleasure is to watch the money growing. It isn't a bad sort of pleasure, perhaps; though it isn't mine."

Old Ready-money had had his pleasure, — had driven to the foundry and the brewery in Susan's carriage; hunted up his tenants, harried his mortgagors, and enjoyed himself every day after his own fashion.

"My own life," Dick went on, with a sort of sigh, "has been one chiefly of hard work; but it has some of the pleasures of success. There are vicissitudes — vicissitudes in business, Mr. Ghrimes. And over there," — he jerked his finger over his left shoulder, in the direction of the Arctic Pole, but Mr. Ghrimes understood him to mean Mexico, — "over there the vicissitudes are very frequent."

"So I suppose."

"Yes. Fancy having your estate confiscated once a year by a new government, which only lasts till the old one picks up strength enough to overturn it. Fancy riding down to the port with a caravan of silver and seeing yourself stripped in a day of six months' work — eh? And fancy having the pleasure of winning it back again at a single *coup*, and hanging all the rascals you haven't shot — eh? There's life, Ghrimes, there's pleasure, there's excitement, in that."

Dick slapped him on the back, and laughed, showing all his white teeth, like a jolly, good-natured lion who slaughters the other beasts for mere pleasure and love of sport. You must tell me more about your life in the West," said Mr. Ghrimes.

"So I will. You shall come in one evening. We are devilish lively in the evening, the governor and I. You drink gin?"

Mr. Ghrimes smiled. Everybody in Market Basing knew of Mr. Mortiboy's weekly bottle of gin.

"Come and see me," he said, "and I'll get Frank Melliship. By Jove! I have quite forgotten that boy. What sort of fellow is he?"

"A capital fellow," said Ghrimes, with enthusiasm. "Full of life and energy; full of cleverness too, though not bookish like his father. One that will revive the old bank, and double its work as soon as he gets into it."

"They haven't been doing well lately?"

"Not so well" — Ghrimes spoke cautiously. "But they will pull through. Oh, yes, they *must* pull through!"

Do you know any thing, Mr. Ghrimes, that goes on?"

"I know every thing that has been done. I don't know every thing that is going to be done."

Richard talked to Mr. Ghrimes for some time. Then he put on his hat and strolled out. Not many minutes' walking brought him to the old bank. He stopped, read the faded old letters, "Melliship, Mortiboy, & Co.," and went in.

"Mr. Melliship in?"

"Yes, sir. Engaged at present. What name?"

"Tell him his nephew, Mr. Richard Mortiboy."

The clerk stared. Was this great bearded giant the son of old Ready-money? The news of his home-coming had been noised abroad, but no report was yet about of the manner of man.

Mr. Melliship was in his private room. With him a clergyman. The banker, looking portly and handsome and well, was standing with his back to the fire, laying down the law.

"In a case of this nature, it is incumbent on the rich to do all they can. It is especially the work of the rich. All rich men ought to contribute."

"I wish all rich men would," said the clergyman, who was the representative of the Society for Sending Additional Missionaries to Cannibal Parts.

"I shall myself" — Here a clerk whispered in his ear. "Show my nephew in. I shall myself," he continued, as Richard entered the room, "have great pleasure in putting down my name for a hundred pounds."

"My dear sir," began the parson in a delighted tone.

"Not a word — not a word, I beg. My dear nephew, I am indeed rejoiced to see you."

He shook hands with his clerical friend! and then, shutting the door, shook hands again with Dick.

"And so you have come home, and are come to see me. I am glad of it — I am

glad of it. Do not let any little ill feeling which may exist on your father's part towards myself be the cause of coolness between us. And where have you been all this time?" Then he said to himself, "I see Emily again in you."

"Looking for fortune."

"Aha! We all look for fortune. How comes it, as Horace asks, that no one is content with the lot which the gods have assigned him?"

"The gods assigned me a pound a week," said Dick; "so I naturally revolted, and made my way without further help from them."

Which was true: his path and that laid down for mortals by the Olympians having been widely different.

"Have the Fates, then—you know we are all under the will of the Fates—been kinder than they promised at first?"

"Yes; that is, I have forced my way."

"Like the old myth of the Titans' war. You know they defeated the gods."

"Indeed, sir, I know nothing of the sort."

"Well, I suppose your reading has been neglected in your travels. You really have done well? You are immensely improved—if you will permit an impertinence—more like your poor mother. You will dine with us this evening?"

"Not to-night, sir. I have another engagement. Next week, I shall be very happy. How is Frank?"

"Well: he is over at Hunslope. And can I do nothing for you, Dick? Do you want any money?"

"None, sir—none, thank you."

"Your father and I are not, unfortunately, on the best terms possible. Between ourselves, the bitter feeling is all on his part. It arises, Dick"—here Mr. Melliship stooped and whispered—"from jealousy at my superior good luck."

Dick stared. What could this mean? He had heard from his father of his uncle's strange conduct on the day of the funeral.

"The years roll on, and bring only successes to me, Richard. I am oppressed, I am encumbered, with my wealth. See here"—he opened a drawer in a safe, and showed it full of sovereigns; "but that is nothing—nothing. This is but a trifle. But, my dear nephew, you must not let me waste my time. I have to negotiate with my agents in London about a loan which demands all my energies, and, really, nearly all my resources. Good-by, my dear nephew, good-by. And remember, you are to dine with us next week."

Dick went away in a sort of amazement. What did his father mean by those mysterious hints about impending misfortune?

Here was a man subscribing £100 to a missionary society, offering him money, talking of his wonderful success, and mixing himself up with foreign loans.

In the afternoon he walked over to Hunslope, along the well-remembered road. Not a tree seemed changed in all the years he had been away.

For a mile, Lord Hunslope's park wall skirted the road.

At a little door Dick had often ridden under in his hunting days, a young man was trying in vain to reach the latch with his whip-handle. His horse was shy and fresh, and would not go within a yard of it. The rider persevered without success. Dick politely opened the door for him.

"You are Lord Hunslope's son, I know," said Dick to himself.

But he was a stranger to Lord Launton, who thanked him, apologized for his horse's shyness, and rode through the gate into the park.

In twenty minutes more, Dick was at Parkside. He arrived there as the short winter's day was closing in. The door was opened by a tall, comely woman of about six and thirty. The lamp was lighted in the hall; and as Dick came into the light—for it was now about four o'clock—it fell full on his face. The woman gave a little cry, and laid her hand on his arm. Then he looked her full in the face, and started back, muttering in his teeth,—

"Damnation!—It's Polly?"

"You, Dick—is it you? I heard you were back again, and I knew it would not be long before you would be coming to look after your poor"—

"Shut the door, Mary," cried a voice from within. "The wind is blowing right through the house. Who is it? Is it Mr. Richard?"

"Meet me on Sunday," Polly had time to whisper, "in the lane behind your father's house. I'm going to Market Basing to see my mother."

"The old place?"

"Ay, the old place. There will be nobody there. Meet me at church time." She gave him a wet, slobbering kiss, and opened the door of Mrs. Heathcote's parlor. "Master Dick Mortiboy, ma'am."

"Cousin Dick!" cried Mrs. Heathcote, springing from her chair. "Master Dick, indeed, Mary, to a big man like this!"

Dick bestowed a cousinly kiss alike on mother and daughters, and shook hands with John Heathcote and Frank Melliship; then he sat down by the fire, and they began to make much of him.

Years before, when Dick was a bright young lad of ten, after his mother died,

Hunslope Farm was the place where alone he seemed to be able to escape from the harshness of a father with whom every thing that he said or did was said or done wrong. At all times of the year it was a happy place. For in the winter there was a meet of the hounds which Cousin John always attended, mounted on a serviceable animal that carried him as well as any scarlet coat's hunter; or he borrowed a gun, and went out with the farmer; or there were parties in the evening, when they danced and played games; or there were the children, Grace and Lucy, and Frank and Kate Melliship, to all of whom he was the senior and the hero. And at other times of the year there would be the woods, full of all manner of delight to boys; with animals put there on purpose to be unsuccessfully hunted, nests only built to be plundered, wild fruit to be gathered. Most of his holidays, therefore, had been spent at Hunslope Farm, till he arrived at the age of sixteen, when his father declared he had had enough schooling, and he put him in the bank at no salary at all, no allowance for pocket-money, and no more holidays. Then his life became very dreary. In that dull old house of his aunt's, few visitors ever came. There were no parties; there was no pleasure. She herself, a good woman, whose heart was wholly given up to religion, gave no thought to the wants—other than the spiritual and bodily wants—of the lad who was growing up longing for society, for some variation of the monotonous life he led. Presently, he began to creep out at nights—letting himself down from the bed-room on the first floor when he was supposed, after nine o'clock, to be asleep; and young Dick Mortiboy became familiar with whatever form of dissipation Market Basing had to offer long before he was tempted, from want of money, to commit the offence which led to his expulsion from home. But of his dissipation, and his nocturnal vigils with the choice spirits of the market-town, good Aunt Susan never knew. And she had mourned for her runaway nephew all the days of her life.

It must be confessed that this return was a fatal blow to Mrs. Heathcote's schemes and projects. Dick returned, not like the Prodigal Son, empty, starving, and repentant,—in which case there would have been hopes for her, because his father would infallibly have sent him empty away,—but rich, fat, well-looking, and independent. Now, in Mr. Mortiboy's judgment, no proverb could be better than that which the Frenchman invented, "Nothing succeeds like success." Success dazzled him. His son, a successful man,—as he said himself.

and it was most unlikely he should lie on so important a point,—was an object of admiration to him. Had he come home like the young fellow in the parable, Mr. Mortiboy might have shown him the forged check, given him another ten-pound note, and bidden him go away again, to show his face no more; but left him his money when he died!

However, Mrs. Heathcote was not the woman to show, even to her own daughters, her regret at an accident so unforeseen. She extended to Dick the hand of friendship and the cheek of affection. She made his visit an occasion of rejoicing; ordered an addition of a brace of birds to the supper; and openly thanked Heaven for his safe return.

Farmer John was unfeignedly glad to see him, and they became at once the best of friends, particularly when, after supper, and over a pipe and brandy and water, Dick reeled off a few of his colonial experiences, of which he had a large stock always ready in his inventive brain. It cost him something not to be able to tell more of the truth to the farmer; but it would not do. It was too important for his own interest to maintain the fiction of the cotton estate.

They had music. Lucy played. Grace sang a duet with Frank. Dick had not spent an evening in the society of ladies for ten long years. He sat mute and softened in their presence; not because he felt any sense of moral degradation, but because there is in youth and purity something of the power signified in that old legend of "Una and the Lion," of taming for the time every wild beast that is not maddened with pursuit and terror. Dick was a wild beast which had not been hunted for many a long day.

"You used to sing and play, Cousin Dick," said Lydia. "Sing one of your old songs."

She touched the cords of a simple old air that he used to sing when he wanted to please her, years before.

Dick shook his head.

"I've forgotten the words, and the tune too, for that matter; but I'll sing you something else if you like."

He sat down to the piano, letting his fingers run carelessly over the keys for a few minutes; and then, playing that sort of simple accompaniment which a man with a musical ear picks up for himself, he sang a Mexican love-song. As he sang it—beating a sort of time now and then with his knuckles on the piano, as a Spaniard beats his guitar at intervals—his rich, flexible voice vibrating in the low room, and his fierce eyes turned full upon the

girls — for it was indeed a love-song, only they did not know its meaning — Lucy shuddered, and grasped tightly the arm of her chair, while Grace stared at him like some poor bird entranced by a rattlesnake.

They both felt relieved when he finished.

"Come," said Farmer John, "that's what I call something like a song. You must learn a few English ones, and then we shall do famously."

"All the Melliships have fine voices," said Mrs. Heathcote. "Yours is a bass; but has not Frank a splendid tenor? You will hear him in church on Sunday."

"You can hear him here better, Dick," said Mr. Heathcote. "Come up often and see us. It must be precious dull work with the old man. Now say Good-night to the girls, and we will have a quiet pipe together before you and Frank go. Tomorrow's Sunday. He'll drive you back with him."

CHAPTER X

DICK MORTIBOY'S drive home from Parkside with his cousin, Frank Melliship, had not the effect of making him sleep more soundly than usual. Indeed, he spent a wakeful night — up to three or four o'clock in the morning, at all events. Two things were in his mind. First, he was wondering what in the world had kept Polly in the service of the Heathcotes all the years he had been away, and how in the world he should get her out of the neighborhood of Market Basing. Secondly, he was struck with the notion that the finest girl he had ever seen in his life was his cousin, Grace Heathcote. And the two together, mistress and maid, crossing each other's paths in the tangled web of Dick Mortiboy's mind, served to keep him awake.

It was half an hour later than the usual breakfast hour when he walked into the parlor. Old Ready-money had finished his meal, and was carefully trimming his nails at the fireplace.

The old gentleman was dressed in the same ancient suit he had worn at the funeral.

"Good-morning, father," said Dick cheerfully. "I have overslept myself by half an hour this morning — a thing I don't do once a year."

"I'm glad to hear you say so, my boy. In a man of business, I love to see punctual habits. Take Time by the forelock, Dick. Look at me: up at daylight — up at daylight — winter and summer. 'Awake, my soul,' the poet says, 'and with the sun,

thy daily stage of business run!' I began that as a boy, Dick, and I've always consistently acted up to it. Nobody can say I haven't."

"All very well in England, father; but in countries I've been living in you have to be up before the sun."

"The poet meant England, Dick. It is the country of the business man."

"Yes, sir; though it must be admitted that a fine stroke of business is done by Englishmen abroad."

The old man's lips were moving, though there came from them no audible sound.

Dick's impression was that his father was repeating to himself the couplet he had made his rule of life.

There was a silence of a few moments, which Mr. Mortiboy was the first to break.

"Dick!"

"Well, father!"

"We've got to go to church. John and Lydia will be here soon. We're going to sit in your poor aunt's pew together. Shall you come with us?"

"Well, father, I have thought it over, and I think not. I shall go to chapel with you next Sunday, I hope."

"Very well, my boy. Very well. It's thirty years, I know, since I ever went to church. I've always paid for my pew at chapel, though, and I've often gone."

"Well, you've got a fair return for it, I hope?"

Dick alluded not so much to the spiritual benefit his father might have derived from his Ebenezer, as to the Dissenting connection, which was rich in the town.

"I must go to church to-day, Dick, with the Heathcotes: it's expected of me after the funeral. The rector's going to preach. I hate a fuss and trouble, though. What is in that box, Dick?" said the old gentleman suddenly, pointing to a case his son had brought back from London with him.

"Only a few specimens and things from the estate, which I got from my partner. Would you like to see them?" asked his son carelessly.

"Ay — ay — plenty of time before church. The bells don't begin till half-past ten. Open it now, Dick — open it now."

Dick lifted his box on to the table, and opened it.

It was a long deal case inscribed in large ink characters with the names of divers ports and stations situate in different parts of the habitable globe, and in it was packed a variety of things which might have gladdened the heart of a collector. Dick turned them all out upon the table. Some were loose, some in small boxes, some wrapped up in brown paper, one or two in many folds of tissue paper.

He threw a pair of curiously worked objects — apparently all beads and feathers — across the table, and began to lie like the proverbial trooper.

"That's a pair of leggings which I took from an Indian in Nicaragua. They were got by the Indian from the King of Mosquito Coast. The small yellow feathers that you see are taken from a very rare bird. They catch him in a trap, pull out the feathers, and let him go again, economically, to grow more. Of course these leggings are extremely valuable all along that coast."

"Dear me?" said Mr. Mortiboy handling them with curiosity.

"Yes," continued Dick. "We were prospecting for silver. I had to shoot the Indian before I took the leggings, of course. You will observe the mark of his blood on the left leg."

"You didn't kill him, Dick?"

"Dead as a door-nail. But he would have killed me if I had not. That's the arrow which he was fitting into his bow as I brought him down. Take care of the point, because it's poisoned; and if you pricked yourself with it, no doctor in Market Basing could cure you."

The old man took it by the feathered end, and held it gingerly at arm's length.

"What did you shoot him with, Dick?" he asked curiously.

"With this," replied his son, taking a revolver from his breast pocket.

"Give them all to me," said Mr. Mortiboy, reaching out his hands. "Give them all to me. I will hang them up in my bedroom, over my bed, and look at them every night."

"You may have the leggings and welcome, and the arrow; but I can't let you have the pistol, because it was given to me by my friend Senhor de Las Casas, of Cuba, who made me promise never to part with it as long as I lived. See, it's silver mounted. Ah! take care; it's loaded."

His father gave it back in haste. A loaded revolver was a fearful and inexplicable weapon, not to be handled.

"But take care yourself, Dick. Good heavens! if it was to go off in your pocket!"

Dick laughed, and proceeded with his budget.

"This ivory-handled dagger I got from the King of Dahomey for killing a gorilla which we met in the woods. His Majesty perhaps overrated my exploit. This—" he went on quickly, for he saw that his father was about to inquire into the nature and habits of the gorilla—"this is some of the silver ore from the Mexican mine I told you of."

"Let me see that—let me see that. Is it real silver?"

"Silver ore, you know. You have to smelt it. There, you see the dark stuff among the mica: that's silver. Put it on your mantle-shelf."

"What!—and have it stolen?"

"A beautiful mine that came from. But I told you about it. It's the mine that only my partner and I know of; and it only wants a capital of £10,000 to work it."

"That's a lot of money, Dick."

"It is—it is—I know it. I suppose we shall have to make a company of it," looking curiously at his father.

Mr. Mortiboy said nothing, and Dick went on to describe his collection.

"This," he said, taking a small roll of parchment, "is one of the most interesting things that I ever got hold of. Now you will never guess what this is?"

"It's a chart, I suppose."

"You're quite right. You never heard of Turks Islands, did you? I thought not. Between Turks Islands and the Bahamas are a lot of small islets—little heaps of sand, many of them—where no ships can go. I went among them, however, with the aid of this map, which my old friend, Captain—never mind his name—gave me. I went among them, father, and I found what he had told me on his death-bed to be all true."

"True! what was true?"

"The position of the wreck indicated in the map. She lies in six to ten fathom water. I went there alone in the ship's yawl, because I would have no eye-witness. She lay to outside the reefs the while.

"There lies the old wreck, sir, and on board of her is"—

Here Dick stopped, and heaved a mighty sigh.

"What is there, Dick?"

"A hundred thousand pounds, in hard ingots of sterling gold and silver—that's all. And it wants five or six thousand to get it up."

"My de-ar boy, my de-ar son, do you tell me that you can lay your hands on a hundred thou—a hundred thou—sand pounds?" Mr. Mortiboy gasped with emotion.

"I? Am I a professional diver? Can I navigate a ship all by myself? No, sir; but I can pay men to dive, and sailors to man a craft; and I can command her myself, and bring home a hundred thousand pounds."

"It's a deal of money, Dick. Six thousand pounds! It takes a long time to get it."

"So it does, so it does. Never mind. I don't ask you to advance a farthing. But

it's right to tell you of these things. I'll start another company."

Dick gazed fixedly at the map, which he folded up, and replaced in the box.

"All the rest are only things from our estate. Here's some of the cotton. Did you ever see finer? See, it grows in its pod, just so. We've got a thousand acres already under cultivation, and shall have another thousand next year. Profits are enormous I shall be able to buy up Market Basing, father, in ten years' time."

"Don't be too sure. You might find me in the way," said the old man, in great good humor. "What's this, Dick?"

"This? oh, only a little Californian nugget. I picked it up myself in another man's washing, and he gave it me. Pure gold. Now, that is something worth having. You take it, and have a ring made of it, and wear it. I have got a little bracelet, made of nuggets of the same stuff, I'm going to give Grace to-day for a birthday present."

"Ah! Well, well, my son, if you had not happily come back to your old father, all would have been very different. Give it her. She's a good girl. I've — I've got something for her myself that will make 'em all stare."

Mr. Mortiboy clutched the nugget greedily. Pure gold! the thing he had spent his life in scraping together. And here was his son picking it up in the open field, without any trouble or exertion, and thinking nothing of it. It seemed strange to him. This, by the way, was the only genuine thing in all Dick's collection.

The old money-grubber leaned back, and looked at all his new-made treasures, and folded them, so to speak, in his arms and devoured them with his eyes. They represented to his imagination — for he had an imagination — boundless possibilities of gain. Sunken treasure, silver mines, cent. per cent. profit on cotton — why should not he have a share in these things? Why should not he, indeed, be the director, manager, owner, and king of all these? But the risk — the risk; and then he would lose his son again.

Already Dick had acquired an influence over his father's mind which no one else had ever had. It was his strength, his vigor, his keen intellect, his audacity, his success, which captivated the old man. He was indeed his son, but how changed from the lad of his memories? Mr. Mortiboy's life had been lonely, and without affection. Between his sister and himself there were few topics of interest in common. He had lived almost entirely in his own room; sitting, night after night, bending over those books of which some men never

tire — morning, noon, and night — books ruled with blue lines horizontally, and red lines vertically. Living this lonely life, he had ceased for years to look for friendship and kindness. Those who are themselves brooders over fancied injuries are never capable of even receiving affection without suspicion and distrust. He knew people loved his brother-in-law. They did not love him. But they came to do business with him — first because he did it better than Mr. Melliship; and, secondly — ha! ha! — because they must; because there was no help for them; because they were wrapped in the coils which he had wound round them; because, if they did not come to him, it only depended on his will whether the cord should be tightened, and their miserable necks wrung. It was something to be powerful: something to be feared. But, meantime, there were gleams of light across his darkened and selfish brain which told him that the love of men was, after all, a good thing to have.

Then suddenly on his monotonous and dismal days had burst the sunshine of vigorous life and strength. In that lonely house there was again a creature that made a noise in it, striding about the place, singing, laughing, having a great voice. Within the circle of Mr. Mortiboy's power had chanced a capture, as he thought, more important than any of the rest — the capture of his errant son. And, good heavens! thought the proud father, what a man he was! decided in action, quick to comprehend, ready to suggest. Strong, too, and comely in face and figure: a man to be proud of: a man before whom Market Basing ought to bow down and do homage. And then, so quiet with all his superiority: always deferring to his father, yet always independent in his judgment. As Mr. Mortiboy went to his bed at this period, he used to murmur to himself a species of thanks for his splendid son — which was addressed to no Deity in particular, but had its own form quite as much as if it were a Collect, and intimated the gratitude of the parent that in his son's breast no Peacock-ery could be found. And he did now what, when he was ten years younger, he would have been incapable of. He believed firmly, absolutely, all that Dick thought fit to tell him: that he was prosperous — not yet rich, but in the way to wealth: that his life had been a long struggle with fortune, and that he had conquered fate. That was to Mr. Mortiboy's mind mere matter of faith, established by an internal conviction not to be shaken. He was, therefore, already inordinately proud of his son; and it wanted but little for the pear which Dick longed to pluck to drop ripe into his hands.

The sound of church bells beginning to chime fell on their ears; and Mr. Mortiboy, with a groan of disgust, rose to put on his overcoat.

"They'll be here directly," he said. "Let us put these things away before they come, else they'll very likely want to be presented with some. Help me to carry them to my bedroom."

Dick had not been in that room since his mother died. It was unchanged: the same red canopy to the bed; the same hangings, only somewhat faded; the same carpet, but worn into holes; and the same chintz-covered chair by the bedside. The only piece of furniture which had been added was a long oaken press, occupying half one side of the room.

Mr. Mortiboy opened it. Within were sundry boxes, drawers, and shelves, together with an iron safe.

"Let us put the things here," he said. "It's the only place where they will be safe. Here are all your poor mother's things, Dick. See"—he opened a drawer in which lay packages in tissue paper—"her jewels: they were all good, poor thing. This is her watch. Ah! dear me. And here are Susan's trinkets: I put 'em in here. I want to give something to Lucy Heathcote—I promised Susan—but not to-day, not to-day. There's that present for Grace.—I'll promise it—from Susan's things. Susan was very fond of Lucy."

The old man had contracted a habit of talking to himself, and sometimes forgot that a listener was present. Dick noted with curiosity the collection of odds and ends—old plate, old watches, rings, forks and spoons—which lay in the strong press, whose thick doors—iron lined—were able to turn the burglar's tools for many an hour. He looked and coveted. Then he deposited his Mexican and Californian spoils with the rest, and saw his father safely lock all up. Ten minutes after, Mr. Mortiboy was on his way to church; and, at the last sound of the parson's bell, Dick lit his pipe, and strolled into the garden which lay at the back of the house.

"It's awkward"—strongly qualified—"that girl turning up again. I must get her out of the way. Anyhow, the governor must not hear any thing—not just as we are getting on comfortably too. It only wants a week or two to make him open his mouth like an oyster, and take up the silver mine, and the sunken ship, and the cotton estate and all.

The long old-fashioned garden was bounded by a high brick wall. There was a door in one corner, always kept locked—not even Mr. Mortiboy knew where the key was. Dick had forgotten this, and tried to

open it. Then he suddenly remembered, and burst into a laugh.

"By jove! nothing is changed in the old place. And here's the pump on which I used to step; and here's the vine by which I got to the pump. Let us climb over, as I used to do when I crept out at night to meet Polly. It's exactly like the old times, only Polly's gone off: and I wish she was dead—by gad!"

Suiting the action to the word, by the help of the vine and the pump, he gained the top of the wall, and threw his legs over it. Beneath him, in the lane, stood Polly; the first at the trysting-place, as she always had been.

"Aha!" cried Dick, with his careless laugh, "there you are, old girl. Isn't it like twelve years ago?"

He leapt down, and stood at her side.

A narrow path ran along by the side of a deep sluggish river, between twenty and thirty feet wide. The path came from nowhere, and led nowhere, consequently no one ever walked along it; and particularly on Sunday morning, it was as lonely as a track in the prairie. Across the river stood, quite alone, a small, newly built villa, run up by an enterprising builder. He had failed, as the result of his enterprise, and the villa was now the property of Mr. Mortiboy. But no one had yet taken it.

Polly was dressed gaudily, in her Sunday best. A tall, finely shaped woman, with a face whose beauty was now on the wane: a well-developed, healthy creature, with those common-place features—good enough in their way—which you often see in country women. Her expression was bad, however, low, cunning and animal. She held out her red, strong hand to Dick, who took it without any great show of affection, and returned it to its owner immediately.

"Well, Poll?"

"Well, Poll? Is that all you have got to say to your true and faithful wife?"

"Don't you think, Poll, you had better stow that?"

"Don't you think you had better do something for me? A pretty thing, indeed, for the wife of old Ready-money's son to be cleaning knives in the kitchen while her husband is singing songs in the parlor! I heard you last night, and I had half a mind to spoil the sport."

"Did you though? Had you really?" Dick laid his heavy hand on her shoulder. "Do you know, Polly, it's devilish lucky for you that you stopped at a half mind?"

"Now, look here, Dick. Don't let's have no chaff. What are you going to do?"

"I tell you one thing I'm going to do, my girl. If you let out even by a whisper, or if I find you have let out, I'll tell the gov-

error every thing, go abroad at once, and never come back again. Now, you know if the governor's the kind of old boy to tip up handsomely to his son's wife — especially if she should turn out to be Polly Tresler. So be sensible, and let us talk things over."

"I'm sure I only want to be friendly" — beginning to whimper. "But it's hard, when one sees her man after twelve years, not to get so much as a kind word."

"If that's all you want," said Dick, "I've got lots of them put by in a box on purpose. I'll give you as many kind words as you like — and kisses, too, when no one's looking."

"No one's looking now, Dick. And oh, how handsome you've got!"

Dick gave a look north, and another south — that is, up and down the lane. After this concession to nuptial modesty, he bestowed a brace of kisses, one on each of his wife's buxom cheeks. She returned them with a warmth that rather embarrassed him.

"And you've never asked about the boy, Dick," she said reproachfully.

"Oh, damn it! Is there a boy?"

"A beautiful boy, Dick — the picture of his father."

"And the boy's at Hunslope Farm, I suppose?"

"Then you suppose wrong, because he isn't. I went up to London again directly after you went and deserted me."

"Hang it! I had to go."

"And never a letter, or a message, or a word, or a single sovereign."

"Hadh't got any sovereigns."

"Well, I went up to London, and the boy was born there, and nobody ever knew any thing about it, Dick. And there he is now at school, bless his heart! and nobody would ever believe he was twelve years old."

Certainly there were more persons than one in the world who were ready to swear that the boy was no more than ten; but then, Dick could not be expected to know that.

"And I lived in London for eight years in service. Oh! good, Dick — I was always good. You believe that, don't you, my handsome husband?"

"Humph! Don't see any reason for saying 'No' at present."

"And then I came back here, and I've been at Hunslope ever since. And oh! Dick, it's many a time I've been tempted to go to old Ready-money" —

"Wouldn't you have a better chance with him if you called him Mr. Mortiboy?"

"And to say to him, 'I'm your lawful

daughter, and little Dick' — only his name is Bill — 'is your true and lawful grandson, and if you're a Christian you'll do something for him.' He'd have ought to have had every farden of the old man's money if you hadn't a come back. I've asked questions. O Dick, I'm glad you're come."

"My father is a Dissenter, Polly. Perhaps his views of the duties of religion are different from ours. You and I are simple Church folk, you know. But I'm glad you didn't."

"No, I didn't. But what are we to do now, Dick? Am I to come and live with you, as in duty bound?"

Here she smiled affectionately at him.

Dick looked at her blankly.

"Things are as they are," he said, repressing a violent inclination to use profane words. "We can't undo what's done. You know, Polly, what an unlicked cub I was when I married you."

"You won't deny that, I hope?"

"That I was a fool? — oh! that I was married! No. I would if I could; but I can't, because there's a register at the church of St. Pancras; and though I was married" —

"That makes no difference, Dick. I found it out from a lawyer."

"Did you? Then you might have spared yourself the pains. No, I'm not going to deny it. And if you hold your tongue, and say nothing to anybody, now I am back, we can meet of an evening, you know, sometimes — I'll do something handsome for you; but if you talk, I'm off again. So there we are, and make no mistake."

Polly said nothing. All her hopes were knocked on the head. She stood twisting a riband in her red, ungloved hands, and looking at the big man, her husband, who enjoined his laws upon her. But she was constrained to obey. There was something in Dick Mortiboy which made most people feel that it would be better for them to do what he told them. And all the time she had been planning a little design to make him pay for silence, or threaten to acknowledge him openly. It did seem hard too.

"How are you off for money?"

"I've got none; and Bill wants new clothes."

"I'll go and see Bill some day — not yet. Here's a ten-pound note. Get the little devil" —

"What, Dick, your own son?"

"What's the matter with the girl? Get the young cuss a new pair of breeches, and don't bother me about him."

He sat on a rail by the side of the lane, for they had been walking up and down, and put his hands in his pockets.

"Upon my word, Polly, I had almost forgotten you; I had indeed. And when I saw you at Hunslope, you might have knocked me down yourself, big as I am."

"And weren't you glad to see me, Dick?"

"No, devilish sorry," said her husband truthfully. "I expected to find you married again, of course."

"Well, I am your wife."

"You said that before."

"And I mean to be too."

"If you don't mean to do what I tell you, it'll be a poor lookout for you. So you'd better make no mistake on that point."

"Don't be cruel, Dick—the very first day and all," said Polly, the tears of vexation rising to her eyes.

The last hardening of a man's heart is the incrustation of that place where a woman's tears take effect. Dick relented a little, and re-stated his case, as a woman's lord and master should; but this time more kindly.

"Now, this is the first and last of it. If I'm to do any thing for you, don't interfere. Don't come between me and the old man. I'm not going to be a brute. I married you, and we can't get rid of that fact. So shake hands Polly, and go home. I'll write you a letter to meet me again as soon as I see an opportunity. We're all going to Hunslope Farm to dinner when they come home from church. But you must take no notice of me."

"No, I won't; no manner of notice," said Polly. "I'm going to wait at table; and Mrs. Heathcote says I'm to look after you especial."

"I knew a man down away in Frisco, Polly, who was married twenty years to a girl, without a soul knowing any thing about it except the parson; and he got shot in a difficulty."

"Did you, Dick? It wasn't yourself, was it?"

"Now, how the devil could it be, when I've only been away twelve years? Well, they had sixteen children, two pairs of 'em twins; and nobody knew it, mind you. And then the man made his pot; and now she rides about in her carriage. And the last time I saw her she had on a blue satin dress, and a red cashmere shawl, and gold chains as thick as rigging ropes. A pretty woman she is still, Polly, and able to enjoy it all. That was the reward of being silent, you see."

"Lor!" said Polly. "Dick, Old Ready-money—I mean, Mr. Mortiboy—is as rich as rich. And they say he can't live long, because he's sold himself to the Devil for all his money. Would you give me a carriage and a gold chain?"

"Half a dozen gold chains and a carriage and four; and all Market Basing shall know that you're my wife, Poll. Give me a kiss, old gal."

They parted friends! The man went off in the direction of his father's house: the woman to visit her mother at her little cottage in the town.

Once they turned back to stare after one another.

Their eyes met! Could each have read the other's mind!

CHAPTER XI.

MR. MORTIBOY'S son was spending half an hour, for the first time in twelve years, with the wife he had married, whilst old Ready-money himself was seated in his late sister's pew in St. Giles's Church. He looked round with some curiosity.

The church of St. Giles at Market Basing is the parish church, and is situate in the middle of the town, where the cross formed by the four principal streets—Bridge Street, Gold Street, Sheep Street, and High Street—starts from. Within a stone's-throw of it are all the public buildings.

Originally the church was a Gothic edifice, the work of some architect whose name has not come down to posterity. The tower looking west bears witness to his skill. The rest of the building was destroyed by fire in the reign of Charles II. That Christian prince thought proper to give a thousand tons of timber from a neighboring royal forest towards the rebuilding of the church. In return, a grotesque statue and a legend detailing the royal munificence were placed over the portico by the corporation of Market Basing. Sir Christopher Wren rebuilt St. Giles's. He drew a square, with a smaller square running out of it—this was the chancel—for his ground plan, and added it on to the old gothic tower. He built four great walls, and pierced them with four ugly oblong windows, and then three small walls, and three small oblong windows to match, for his chancel. He roofed it over with a dwarfed dome and lantern, reminding you of St. Paul's in a toy box, and left it to the people of Market Basing to worship in, in the stead of their old Gothic church.

So every thing remained for a century and a half. Then came a change.

We live now in the age of church restoration; but the fever struck the rector of St. Giles's when the nineteenth century was young.

The dome I have mentioned was sur-

ported by four great pillars of white stone; up to these, on each side of the church, came the front railing of a gallery. In 1806 the rector laid his plans for pulling down these galleries, slicing a few rows of pews off, and putting them up again clear of the pillars. This was only part of his scheme, though what else he wanted to do does not matter now. Of course he called on his richest parishioner—the third of the Mortiboy race—for a subscription. And the “scholar” promised him a hundred pounds on his assurance that a London architect had pronounced the galleries unsafe. To this promise, Mr. Mortiboy added a condition. It was that he should not be asked for any more. Unluckily for the parson, Mr. Mortiboy’s own seat was in the front row of one of the galleries, and he had forgotten to mention that the new erections would not be precisely similar to the old ones. And the banker owned what he called a faculty pew; a quasi freehold, to be bought and sold with his house, and for which no pew rent was to be paid.

The very day he heard of the arrangement to sacrifice his seat, he was asked by the rector for a second subscription, on the ground that there was so much more being done than was at first intended. This was more than Mr. Mortiboy could stand. His gallery gone, his hundred pounds gone—this was much; but to be asked to give more for further desecration of vested rights and spoliation of property, was more than he could bear.

So, followed by a good many of the parishioners, he seceded to the modest Little Bethel which had hitherto sufficed for the Nonconformist interest. They pensioned off, economically, the wheezy old man who had preached in it for thirty years—ever since he had given up cobbling on having a call—and sent for an eloquent preacher, an awakener. Then came the tug of war; and Market Basing was divided pretty equally, and with more than the usual bitterness, between Church and Dissent.

Such is the history of the celebrated Market Basing schism, as notable in its way as many a better-known division in the Church.

With a display of that old dog-in-the-manger spirit, to gratify which a Shropshire nobleman spent untold sums in building round his great park a wall high enough to keep out the hunting-field, Mr. Mortiboy never went to the church again, nor did he suffer any of his family to go there. But the bitterness wore off gradually. And when he died, his son, our Ready-money, though he never went to church, was not seen so often at chapel; while Susan Mortiboy, his sister, went to every church

service that was held, and to every meeting, and in all parish affairs was as good as ten deaconesses to the parson. Mr. Mortiboy revolved all these things as he sat in the church that morning.

During the service—which was an unfamiliar thing to him, and touched him not—his mind ran back to old times, and he saw himself again playing with Francis Melliship, making love to his sister Emily as he grew older, marrying at that very altar. For a moment the bitter feeling against Mr. Melliship died away, to revive again the moment after, when the thought occurred to him that in a few days his enemy would be at his feet, craving his forbearance and assistance.

The hymns affected him little, because Mr. Mortiboy had no ear for music; and, besides, he was thinking how he should behave when Mr. Melliship came for help. Should he remind him of slights offered five and twenty years ago? Or should he be content to take that moment as an acquittance in full, and be friends again as of old? He inclined ever so little to the latter course.

In that place he was such an unusual sight, that the people all stared at him over their prayer-books. They thought him very much affected by the loss of his sister, because he looked neither to the right nor to the left, but gazed straight before him. Presently, looking forward in this way, his eye caught the face of the preacher, and he was constrained, in spite of himself, to hear the text.

Market Basing is one of those places where funeral sermons are still preached. The text chosen by the friend of Susan Mortiboy, as the theme for his tribute to her memory, was the thirty-eighth and thirtieth verses of the eighth chapter of Romans.

The preacher spoke out the words in a clear and penetrating voice:—

“For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

I have given the text. I will not attempt to reproduce the sermon. I should only do injustice to it. But it seemed to Old Ready-money that it was directed personally at him.

It told of the sin of self-seeking, in its various forms. It showed how the good woman whose death had made a gap in their midst lived wholly for others; and though she could not take her wealth with her—here a warmth crept over the brother’s heart, because he knew it was all his—she

had made it a blessing to the poor, and used it as if it were a trust. Here Mr. Mortiboy felt aggrieved. And the preacher, waxing eloquent with his theme, showed that the worship of self is shown in more ways than in the hoarding up and misuse of money — here Mr. Mortiboy felt uncomfortable, because the clergyman was really looking at him : why could he not look at Heathcote ? — how by disregarding the interests of others, by ignoring their wishes, by pursuing a line which brings misfortune on them, by failing to anticipate their desires, and by countless other ways, the selfish man makes the paths of others hard for them. Mr. Mortiboy thought of his rival, Mr. Melliship, whose path he was about to make very hard, and almost wished, for a moment, that it was not so. And then he drew two pictures — one of him who had no money, but yet had in his heart charity, and sympathy, and thoughtfulness for his neighbor ; and one of the rich man who had these virtues in addition to his wealth ; and he showed how each in his way was a kind of Providence to the place — preventing more than healing ; making men continue in goodness, rather than repent of evil. And then Mr. Mortiboy turned pale, and a chill fell on his heart, because he knew that he had done no good to anybody else, not so much as to one neighbor ; and that the only good he had done to himself was to amass money and increase his wealth. Then the preacher generalized ; and such is the power of a contented mind, that Mr. Mortiboy forgot a few moments after where he was, and lost himself in thought — about what he should do with Dick.

It was Sacrament Sunday. The plate came round, and caught him unprepared ; at another moment, Mr. Mortiboy would have taken no notice of the intrusion. Now he was softened a little, and recollected he meant to give something when he came ; so he dropped a coin into it, with a conscious glow of one who does a good action. Mr. Heathcote, who had been asleep, as was his wont during sermon — not from any disinclination to listen, but from sheer force of long habit — woke up, put a crown piece in the plate, and church was over.

Dinner at Parkside. It had a threefold aim. First, as Mrs. Heathcote observed, it would help to divert that melancholy with which she was persuaded her cousin, Mr. Mortiboy, was afflicted at the loss of his sister ; secondly, to welcome Dick back to England ; and thirdly, because it was Grace's birthday, and Grace was twenty-one. There was another reason which she kept to herself, that on Sunday Mr. Melliship always remained at home and dined *en famille* ; so that there was no chance of

Frank calling in the evening, and a reasonable excuse for not asking him. Mr. Mortiboy's dislike to his brother-in-law extended to his nephew as well.

Dick was the quietest of the guests, partly because he was still unused to the society of ladies, and felt it was desirable to keep a curb upon his tongue, which had a habit, indeed, of dropping pearls of conversation, but roughly set. The girls, too, were quiet : Lucy, because she was still full of grief for her friend, Aunt Susan, as she was always called ; and Grace out of sympathy. But Mr. Mortiboy was in high spirits, perhaps from the influence of that glow of virtue of which we have spoken before, and perhaps from the revulsion of feeling which comes after a time of gloom and trouble. He sat with his chair a foot from the table, leaned forward at an unpleasant angle and said, "Beautiful, beautiful!" to every eatable presented to his notice. When the pudding was brought in by Polly, he remarked that it shook, and he liked to see a pudding shake — it was a good sign ; and as he drank half a glass of port, with a bit of blue Stilton, he was pleased to notice that the cheese was the only bad thing about the dinner. His chief topic of conversation was his son, of whom he spoke as admiringly as if he had not been present at the table, and frequently patted his broad back. Mrs. Heathcote encouraged him, put in little ejaculations of, "La! now, uncle!" "Is it possible?" and so on ; while the old man garrulously prated of the good days he was going to have now Dick was come back. Mr. Mortiboy, in spite of his penurious ways at home, was by no means averse to the good things of life. He had schooled himself to believe that it was waste of money to have a decent dinner cooked for himself every day ; but it would have been a waste of opportunity to refuse whatever good things were offered by others. So the dinner passed off very cheerfully. It was not exactly pleasant for Dick to have his own wife waiting on him — she had ridden back on the box of John Heathcote's sociable — nor was he altogether free from alarm when his cousin asked him if he had left his heart behind him, knowing that Polly had a fine high temper of her own, which could not at all times be trusted. Nothing, however, happened to disturb the peace between them. When the table was cleared, Mr. Heathcote, in a tone of much solemnity, called upon all to fill their glasses. Health-drinking was a ceremony which he would not have omitted for worlds on such an occasion. He began a little speech.

"By-gones," he said, "should be by-gones. There is no occasion for crying

over what can't be helped. We've had to grieve, and we may now rejoice. Let us drink the health of"—

"My—good—gracious! what a dreadful thing!" cried Old Ready-money, falling back in his chair, his face as pale as ashes.

Mr. Heathcote stopped suddenly. They all started.

"What is it, Uncle Richard?" cried Mrs. Heathcote.

"Well, I sha'n't forget this!" He was looking at something in his hand.

"What is it, uncle?"

"I *have* done it!" he replied solemnly. "I've put a sovereign into that plate at the church instead of a shilling."

It was true. In the confusion of the moment, his thoughts distracted from what he was doing, he had put his fingers into the right waistcoat-pocket, where were five sovereigns, instead of the left where were as many shillings.

Mr. Heathcote repressed an inclination to roar, as at one of the best jokes he had ever heard—before he caught, just in time, a look of admonition from his wife.

"What is to be done? I never made such a mistake in my life before," cried Mr. Mortiboy.

"What can be done?" cried Mrs. Heathcote.

"You have done more good than you intended, Uncle Richard," said Lucy. "Some poor persons will have a better dinner next Sunday."

"Better stuff and rubbish!" said Mr. Mortiboy.

"Well, then," said Dick, whose ignorance of church customs must be pleaded in excuse for the hardihood of the suggestion, "write to the parson, and make him give back your change."

"Well,—why not? It's only right," said his father.

"O uncle!" Lucy expostulated.

"I'll send John," said Mr. Heathcote, "if you like."

He saw here the materials for as good a thing as had ever come under his notice, and was determined to make the most of it.

They got paper, and Mr. Mortiboy was going to write, explaining that, in the hurry of the moment, he had made a mistake of some importance—viz., the substitution of a sovereign for a shilling—and begging the rector to return to him the balance due.

But Mrs. Heathcote contrived to make her uncle postpone this till he got home. She did not want the letter dated from Parkside.

Then Mr. Heathcote went on with his speech.

"I have forgotten, now, what I intended to say specially; but I was going to pro-

pose Dick's health. Dick, my boy, we're glad to see you, and proud of you; and you're always welcome, as you always were, at Parkside."

Mr. Mortiboy's voice shook a little as he raised his glass and said,—

"We'll drink, Dick! we'll drink, Dick! —your health, my son!"

The big prodigal had found his way to his heart; and he loved him better now, far better, than he had ever loved him as a boy.

Dick said a few words; and then Mr. Heathcote filled his glass with an air of business, and looked at his wife, who pulled out her handkerchief. They knew what was coming. But Mr. Mortiboy astonished them all.

"Let me," he said, "say a few words." He turned to Grace. "Grace, my dear, we are going to drink your health, and many happy returns of the day. For twenty-one years, I think, I've dined here on every birthday of yours, and drunk a glass of port to you every year. Lydia, your children are good girls. Had things been different with me—had Dick not, happily, come back to us—I should—But there is no telling what might or would have been done."

Here Mrs. Heathcote buried her face in her handkerchief.

"And now, my dear, I wish you a long and happy life, and a careful husband and"—here he hesitated a little, and pulled out his pocket book—"here, my dear,"—he took out a crisp and new bank note, and looked at it admiringly for a moment; then he put it from him as if the action cost him something—"here, my dear, is a present for you."

It was a hundred-pound bank note. Grace read the amount with a sort of stupefaction, and passed it to her father. Mr. Heathcote took it gravely, and gave it back to his daughter. And then it went round, and there was a simultaneous cry of gratitude and surprise. They were shocked at the old man's unlikeness to himself.

"But what in the world will you do with it, Grace?" said her mother. "You will have to put it into Uncle Mortiboy's bank."

"Yes, do, Grace," said the donor; "and I'll see if I can't give you interest for it."

Five minutes after she had received her present, Grace handed it back to her uncle to "take care of" for her; and he received it with a grasp, and returned it to his pocket-book hastily.

It was at once the cheapest and the handsomest present he could give; and he knew he should get it back again "to take care of," when he decided upon what form his present should take.

Poor Grace? It did seem rather hard to her to be tantalized by the sight of such a splendid sum of money, and then to have it suddenly ravished from her sight, and consigned to the dark dungeons of the bank — a prisoner not to be released.

In the evening, Mr. Mortiboy sat in the easiest chair by the fire, and next him Mrs. Heathcote. And he conversed with her about his son Dick, telling her over and over again how great a comfort to him the boy already was; laying out his schemes for an easier life, and planning the happiness that was to be his, now Dick was come home again. Dick, for his part, was listening to the girls as they sang hymns.

"Your nose, my lady," said Mr. Heathcote that night, laying his manly head upon the pillow, "appears to me to be put out of joint."

"Don't be coarse, John," returned his partner.

"Any how, old Ready-money has broken out in a new place. That hundred pounds of his is all our girls will get. But the old man is improved by it, and I'm glad Dick has turned up again."

"Poor boy!" said his wife with feeling. "So am I. John, mark my words, — though you must have seen it, — Dick's setting his cap at Grace already."

John was coarse enough to laugh at this remark, and to continue silently shaking till slumber smoothed out his limbs, and composed them for rest.

As for Mr. Mortiboy, he went home well satisfied, and not the less pleased because the morrow would bring his brother-in-law, for the first time in his life, for assistance and forbearance. For he knew well enough that it was quite beyond the power of Francis Melliship to meet his liabilities. It would be something like a new pleasure to see his proud brother-in-law open his case, and admit that he wanted time. It would be a real pleasure to have him, like all the rest of Market Basing, secretly under his own thumb. Mr. Mortiboy rubbed his hands when he thought of it. He would not ruin Melliship: he would even help him. But he would help him at a price, and that price should be his own aggrandizement. To have both the banks at his command would be almost to rule the county as well as the town. To make of Mr. Melliship a superior Ghrimes would be an ample return for those slights he had endured at his hands so long ago. And it fell out so well for Dick too. He could go back, arrange his affairs abroad, and return in a year or two to leave Market Basing no more, and to succeed him in all his wealth; and even Mr. Mortiboy himself did not know

how much that wealth amounted to by this time.

So he, too, went to sleep; and all Market Basing slumbered — except one man.

CHAPTER XII.

THAT man was Francis Melliship!

Old Ready-money's brother-in-law — rival, as he considered him; enemy, that he had tried to make him — spent the Sunday in his usual fashion. In the morning, he went to church with his household, filled his accustomed seat in the family pew, and heard the funeral sermon; dined early, and in the evening went to church again.

Dr. Kerby walked with the Melliships as far as their own door, after the morning service. He begged his old friend, the banker, to take a rest from his work. He took Mrs. Melliship aside, and whispered to her in terms imperative and strong. He told her she must take her husband for a change of air that very week, on some pretext or another.

"If Mr. Melliship won't take you, my dear lady, you must take him."

"Doctor, you alarm us. What — what is the matter with my dear husband?" she asked, unable to conceal the nervous feeling the doctor's words produced, yet unwilling to tell him of the signs of unnatural change in her husband she saw herself.

These were clear enough; but neither the wife nor the son nor the daughter could read their meaning.

They saw the change that cast its shadow over their house. Their anxiety for husband and father was intense.

What could they do? Nothing. And this inaction was terrible to them.

Mr. Melliship was in high spirits all day: he had been in high spirits all the week. His face was flushed, his movements quick and nervous. He was very excitable, and talked in a wild, exaggerated way.

His present was the very opposite of his natural state.

His talk all the week had been perpetually of one kind, — about money, about his own wealth. For the first time in her life, his daughter Kate began to think her father ostentatious. The thought but suggested itself, to be stifled as unworthy; the fault was in her, she thought, not in her father.

Now, on this day, he was even more demonstrative of his newly-born pride of purse. He spoke of his intention of removing from the old bank where they had

lived so many years, of buying an estate, of having a town house, of getting new plate, of spending money on a hundred things which he had hitherto been quite content to do without.

"But, my dear," expostulated his wife, half in doubt, half in earnest, "all these will cost us a great deal of money."

"And if we have the money to spend on them, my dear?" replied her husband. "What says the Latin poet, Frank?"

*'Vitam quæ faciunt beatorem,
Jucundissime Martialis hæc sunt,
Res non parva labore, sed relicta'—*

Eh? Now, I would wager that you cannot finish it."

"I cannot indeed, father. I don't suppose I can read it."

"This degenerate age!" sighed his father. "And here is a man who has only just taken his degree, and cannot cap a quotation from Martial. It was very different in my time, I can tell you, sir. We read Latin at any rate. But the

'Res non parva labore'

will be yours, my boy, and that is the great thing, after all. Frank," he suddenly added, "I have often thought how enormously rich a family, starting from absolutely nothing, might become by dint of sheer economy, and allowing themselves no luxuries, so that the money might all accumulate. Thus, the Fuggers in the fourteenth century went on splendidly, till there came a fool who threw the family wealth away. My idea is, that the family is to have no fool at all in it."

"If money is every thing," said Frank, "it might be worth the while of a man to found a rich family in this way."

"He would inculcate, as a kind of religion," Mr. Melliship went on, "the laws of frugality and industry. He who failed or came short of his duties should be solemnly cut off from the rest. In six generations, provided the sons were of average brain power, the family would be as rich as the Rothschilds."

Mr. Melliship grew quite excited as he spoke.

"But is it worth while to take all the trouble?"

"Surely yes, Frank. Money, in all ages, means—if you please to use it for that purpose—comfort and luxury; or it means power and authority; or it means ability to advance the world in any way that seems best to you. Surely, therefore, whether you are an Epicurean or a Christian, you must desire money. Whatever your character, you must wish that you had it. And if it were not for the selfishness of men,

they would deny themselves in order that their children might have it."

"At all events, Uncle Richard is not a selfish man, then."

Mr. Melliship laughed.

"He has saved money, I believe—only thousands, though; and his son Dick will have them. My dear, let us have Dick to dinner one day this week. Any day; ask the rector—a very capital fellow, full of energy: a man that you must cultivate, Frank, and learn from him all that he can teach you."

This was how he talked all dinner time. After his wife and daughter left them, he staid behind with Frank, and finished his bottle of wine. They had some sacred music; and at nine o'clock Mr. Melliship read prayers, as was his wont on Sunday evening, and shortly after retired to his own study. This was not unusual, and did not excite any comment.

He sat down before the fire, with the bottle of brandy by his side. And turning his lamp down so as to have little but the firelight, sat with crossed legs, and a pleased, happy expression of countenance. He was thinking of his revenues, of his vast property, and making schemes for the happiness of his children. Hour after hour passed thus, and he had more than once drained the glass. The clock struck eleven, twelve, and one, without his moving from the chair. And the fire, burning lower and lower, at last went out altogether. The cinders were black. All that remained to tell there had been a fire in the grate was the crackling noise the cooling embers made. Still, he moved not. The curtains were not drawn; and the moon, bursting suddenly from behind a cloud, shone through the windows, and fell full upon the portrait of his children above the mantelshelf.

The bright light caught his eye; and, in a moment, Francis Melliship awakened from his reveries. He started up, passed his hand across his brow, and looked wildly round.

Is there any thing in all dramatic literature more dramatic than the awakening of Ajax after his night of madness? The goddess calls him: the proud king and warrior comes at Athênê's call, blood-stained, breathing fury and revenge; telling how, in the dead of night, he has gone secretly forth, and captured his enemies: how they are within, the two sons of Atreus, bound and tied, waiting to receive the stroke of his sword; and the crafty son of Laertes, Ulysses the fox, for whom is torture before death. So raging, but contented, he returns to his tent. Presently comes the day, and with it a return of his senses.

He wakes from his frenzy, and finds himself surrounded by the carcasses of the beasts he had slain in place of the Grecian princes. Then his fortitude gives way. "Ai, Ai!" he mourns, "Alas! Alas! there is but this one thing left, nobly to die." And so he bids farewell to his wife and his son, and the dear light of the sun, and falls upon his sword, and goes away to those regions of shade where the souls of departed heroes ever wander sadly, lamenting the days of life.

So in a moment the whole horror of his situation burst upon the unfortunate Francis Melliship. The moonlight, pale and bright, fell on his book of memoranda. His eyes caught the words, "*February 10th, Monday, Mr. Mortiboy.*" These five words spoke volumes. The riches he had boasted of did not exist: there were no investments, or only investments that had lost him money: there were no means of meeting the liabilities that fell due on the morrow. For the last three or four weeks, he had been suffering from delusion and madness. But he was not mad now, and he saw his position in all its miserable conditions. How could he explain? How make people understand that what they would mistake for the dishonest boasting of a broken swindler was only the natural expression of an overpowering delusion? He could not: no one could: there would be but one opinion possible. And then to walk for the rest of his days ruined in purse and reputation; the broken banker, the rash speculator, the dishonest bankrupt, mad Melliship! He who had been the first in the town, — the proudest, the most prominent, the best bred, and the most highly considered.

He rose with a gesture of despair, stepped into a dressing-room adjoining his study, and came out with a case in his hand, which he held for a few moments as if dreading to open it.

He held it in his hand hesitating.

The moon shone out, and between his eyes and the moonlight there stood once more the figure of the dead woman which he had seen a week before. Again she appeared to him; and this time not pointing to the picture of his children, not stern, reproachful, and threatening, but smiling, pleased, and happy. Her age seemed to have fallen from her, and she appeared as she had been thirty years before, when they were young together.

"Susan!" cried the unhappy man, stretching out his hands, "speak to me. Susan, my first love, why do you come back in the semblance of those old times? Susan, forgive my broken troth, and the

promise that you and I alone know of. Speak to me, Susan!"

She did not speak, but beckoned; and when he looked again she had disappeared.

He sat a while with troubled brow, trying to think. He could think of two things only: the horror and disgrace of the future, which his disturbed state of imagination augmented; and the image of his old friend — young again — radiant, smiling, beckoning to him. Beckoning! but where? Surely to some land far off, where there would be no more trouble, but only youth, and love, and pleasant fancies.

As the moon shifted round to the west, the light left the portrait of the children, and moving slowly round the room, came upon the form of Mr. Melliship lying prone upon the hearthrug. He was not sleeping, but dead; and the black pool that shone in the light of the moon was blood that came from his self-inflicted wound. Like Ajax, he could not bear the disgrace. Without a word of farewell to his children, or of explanation or motive, he had left all his troubles and burdens to be borne by shoulders weaker than his own. Selfish? Perhaps. It is the custom to say that suicides are cowards, and selfish. But there is a point of physical or moral suffering at which every man will give way, and prefer immediate death. We cannot endure beyond that point. Heaven keep us from suffering that even comes near it!

CHAPTER XIII.

It was Monday morning, February the tenth. The time, three o'clock. The moon had gone down, and the wind, blowing in gusts, soughed and sighed, as it played round the house, making windows and doors rattle. Within all was quiet. No one in that house heard it.

On the hearth-rug of the study lay the corpse of the ill-fated gentleman, Francis Melliship.

Overhead, his son Frank slept dreamlessly.

In their several chambers, wife, daughter, servants were asleep.

And he, husband, father, master, lay dead!

O giant death, door of life, what lies not within the compass of thy power!

Over the waking horror of those to whom the dead man was dearest, I draw a veil. Let me pass by the misery of that awakening, — the first great shock, the widow's cry of anguish, the wail of the orphans.

It was at five minutes past seven that the news left the door of the bank, whispered in the startled ears of the milk-boy. At eight Market Basing breakfasts: by that time everybody was in possession of the news.

"Mr. Melliship at the bank's dead."

They killed him in twenty different ways. But they gave one reason for it—the true one: that he was a ruined man.

The bank opened its doors every day at ten.

Long before nine, knots of people were gathered about the street, and every minute they increased in numbers.

People in the town sent sons or servants post haste to tell the news to relatives in the country who banked at the old house, and might be supposed to have money lying there.

"Melliship the banker has cut his throat!"

The truth was out, and the town was wild with excitement.

It was assize time. The judges were to come in by the first train, and the town was filling with country people.

The street that the old bank stood in was soon like Gaol Lane on the day of an execution. There was a great crowd, a stifled buzz of voices, and one object of attention: the great stone house, with all the blinds drawn down, and iron shutters that might or might not be raised at ten o'clock.

This was the scene outside. But what was the picture within?

The terrified clerks, who had hurried down to the bank as soon as they heard what had happened, were behind the shutters in the half-dark room, discussing in whispers what was to be done. Of course they suspected that there was something wrong, though not one of them had any knowledge of the real state of affairs. Mr. Sanderson, the cashier, who had been in the bank forty years, only knew that Mr. Melliship had recently made very large payments, on what account he was unable to say.

Frank came down pale as death, his dress in disorder, more ignorant and more distracted than any of them.

"Mr. Sanderson," he said, "the people are collecting in the street. Can we open the bank before ten? Is it possible they suspect that my unhappy father put an end to his life because he was not solvent? They can hardly think that; they must know he did it when he was deranged. O father, father!" and the young man sobbed in his agony of grief.

"All will be well, sir, I hope," the old retainer said, in a voice choked with emotion.

"We must have the books and money. Where are the keys?"

"The keys were always in your father's possession," said the old clerk solemnly.

Frank shuddered, and buried his face in his hands. His father's body had been laid on his bed. Who was to take them from it?

The clerk saw his hesitation.

"Excuse me, Mr. Frank," he said, the tears running down his cheeks as he spoke; "but some one must get the keys. Let me get them."

Frank assented, and the old servant went alone into the room where the body of his master lay, and presently came back with a blanched cheek, and the bunches of keys in his trembling hands.

They opened the iron door in his presence, for it was evident there would be a run on the bank, and went in.

It was the honor of his father's name Frank wished to protect. No other feeling could have roused him from the shock his father's awful end had given him.

The force of circumstances compelled him to act at once.

The strong room—the place where books, securities, and "safe custodies" of all sorts were kept—was fire and thief proof; but for still greater safety, in its farthest side was a money safe, built into the wall.

In this the cash was kept; and they unlocked it without delay, for time pressed; people were already drumming the street door with their heels.

The next question was, What did it contain? This was soon settled.

The black leather note-case was examined first.

"Open it," said Frank.

More than half the compartments had their own notes in them—some ready for issue, the bulk of them undated and unsigned.

Sanderson gave a ghastly smile.

Frank understood it.

Paper bearing the signature of Melliship, Mortiboy & Co. was at a discount that morning; though a few hours before, people would have bought the five-pound notes at four pounds nineteen shillings and eleven pence halfpenny apiece as long as you liked to sell them.

The old cashier turned to the bank of England notes. Their value was £2,550.

Frank wrote it down on a piece of paper. Next they counted the gold—£1,100, in yellow canvas bags of a hundred pounds each; fifty-three odd sovereigns.

Then they reckoned up their stock of silver.

Two sacks, with one hundred pounds in

each. Nineteen pounds ten and sixpence loose.

"The copper we need not consider, sir," said Mr. Sanderson. "What is the total? Three, nine, two, two, ten, six," he added as he read the amount over Frank's shoulder.

"It seems a large sum, but I have no idea of how far it will go."

"It is enough, sir, and more than enough, for any ordinary day; but there will be what I never saw before, and, please God, shall never see again — a run on Melliship's. At any rate, Master Frank, we must go on paying as long as we can."

"Yes."

"The bank is all right, sir, never fear. With a head like your poor father's was — till these last weeks — we're not likely to be far wrong when things are looked into." The clerk's confidence in the master he had always served was so strong, it would not have been shaken if there had been only twopence found in the locker.

"And if," said Frank, rousing himself with an effort from the fearful thoughts that filled his mind — "if the people's confidence is not established when our stock of ready cash is run out?"

"Then," replied Mr. Sanderson, with trembling lip, "we must put the shutters up, unless Mortiboy's will advance us money." Then, slapping Frank's shoulder, he cried, with energy, "Go quickly, sir — go yourself to Mr. Ghrimes, and tell him what a state we are in; and Mr. Mortiboy, your uncle, too. Go, Master Frank, go. Save our credit. We must have more than we've got, or before twelve o'clock the shutters must go up — which God forbid!"

In town or country, a banker's stock of cash is always lowest on Monday. Saturday is the great day for paying out. On Monday morning, customers begin to pay money in. On this day, the cash at the old bank was lower than usual by at least a third; for two customers had on Saturday drawn £2,000 in notes between them. One had a mortgage to settle, another had bought a house; and, as lawyers don't take checks for such purposes, they had drawn their money out of the bank, and made their payments in notes.

The persons interested in the solvency of Melliship's were the depositors. Clearly, debtors would not care. It was the creditors that were going to make the run.

They were small shopkeepers, who kept balances of fifty pounds and under at the bank. These men were the most afraid. Larger traders had from one hundred to two hundred and fifty pounds lying to their credit.

The largest balance was kept by Hopgood, Pywell & Co., linendrapers; but their bills had been met on the 4th. On the 10th of the month they had not above a couple of hundred pounds in the bank.

None of these classes could be hurt much.

Trade is a very elastic thing.

But the doctor, with all his little savings there; the retired shopkeeper; poor gentlemen and gentlewomen in town and country, who had placed nearly all they possessed in Mr. Melliship's custody — for them, his failure meant their ruin.

Here I will show briefly how this failure had been brought about.

Mr. Melliship was by nature a gentleman: he never conceived a mean thought, nor did a mean action. When his father died, instead of carrying on the banking business, he ought to have disposed of it to old Mortiboy, and gone into the country to live the life of a village squire.

Unhappily for himself and his family, he carried the business on, though he was wholly unfit for it.

Sanguine, he invested largely in foreign stocks, promising a high rate of interest; in land and credit companies; in South American mining speculations. This was gambling; but he learnt the truth too late.

Then, in conducting the legitimate business of a country bank, he behaved in a way exactly opposite to ready-money Mortiboy's notions of trading.

And Mortiboy was right, and Melliship wrong.

In agricultural districts, bankers make advances to the farmers. The security is their stock and their crops. Mr. Melliship advanced his customers money at five per cent. Old Mortiboy at six or seven per cent., according to his customer.

Mr. Melliship never pressed a man, never turned a deaf ear to a tale of distress.

A sorrowful tale told to a banker by his debtor always has for its end time or money.

Mr. Melliship belonged to the old-fashioned school of country banker; he never threw a man over; he gave him time, gave him more money, bolstered him up. He went on throwing good money after bad, making new advances to keep his debtor afloat, till the man became involved beyond the power of extrication. Then came the final crash, and the money of the bank was lost, buried under a mountain of difficulties.

After harvest is the time at which the farmer repays the banker in corn-producing counties.

Stock sells all the year round; and so a little dribbles back. In the Southern counties the lambs pay the rent. In April

and May, the banker gets his money back through Biggerstaff's or Lacy's, who do the banking of the London salesmen.

In Holmshire there is a little of every thing; the land is described by agriculturalists as "useful." Stock, corn, and lambs are produced; and, on these securities, the bankers at Market Basing make advances.

Mr. Melliship took the bad business; old Mortiboy the good—or none.

There had been four bad years, and the farmers had, for once, good reasons to complain of their bad luck. There were bad harvests and bad lambing seasons; and disease broke out among the cattle to finish matters.

A bad year means this: the bank must go on advancing till next harvest. This had been repeated three times; and it ruined the old bank; for Mr. Melliship had long before dissipated his father's wealth.

He had been compelled to borrow money in large sums on his promissory notes. He had had no difficulty in doing this: his connection was large and rich. And very few people knew of his embarrassments until four months before his death, when a client of old Mortiboy's died. His son deposited promissory notes of Mr. Melliship's to the amount of £11,575 in the old gentleman's hands for safe keeping, and presentation at maturity. They fell due on Monday, Feb. 10.

Mr. Melliship's difficulties had driven him mad, and Mr. Mortiboy was robbed of the pleasure of seeing his brother-in-law at his feet.

Let us follow Frank. He ran off to see Ghrimes.

It was a quarter to ten, and there was no time to be lost. He walked into the street, and through the knots of excited talkers, who made way for him, with no words of salutation; for his hat was drawn over his eyes.

Mr. Ghrimes lived at the other end of Market Basing. When Frank got there it wanted five minutes to ten; and he was gone—just gone—to the other bank. Frank hastened after him.

"Good Heavens! Mr. Frank, what's this?" cried the manager, when he saw him.

"You know it, Mr. Ghrimes. It is all true. Come round, for God's sake! and help us," Frank gasped, breathless with excitement and haste. "There is going to be a run upon the bank. Hark! there is ten striking. Come, quick, Mr. Ghrimes. I must get back."

It was scarcely etiquette, but Mr. Mortiboy's manager threw formality to the winds and went.

Mr. Sanderson would not allow the bank to be opened till Frank returned.

"Open the doors at once," said Frank; "Ghrimes will be here immediately."

As the doors opened, a crowd of men surged in. The younger clerks shrank back frightened; but Mr. Sanderson advanced to the counter with bland and re-assuring smiles. They all opened at once, like so many hounds at scenting a fox. Mr. Sanderson held up his hand. They were silent directly.

"Hush! gentlemen, hush! Have you not heard the dreadful news? Mr. Frank is in there. Do not let us disturb him."

"I want to dra' moy money," roared a bluff old publican—who had about fifty pounds in the bank—from the neighborhood of the door.

"Pray, gentlemen, let that person come and take his money," said Mr. Sanderson. "Oh! it's you, is it, Mr. Stubbs? You are to be served before anybody else, because you haven't got the manners to wait."

This created a little laugh. The panic was only just beginning. The man received his fifty pounds and went off, grumbling. When he got outside, he hesitated. Had he turned back, and given his money again to the bank—as was his first impulse, on finding it so promptly paid—all might have been well. For men possess themselves largely the sheep-like propensity of following where one leads. But a moment of indecision was succeeded by the cold breath of doubt; and Stubbs buttoned up his gold, and walked away.

Stubbs was met outside by his friends.

"Got it—is it arl right? Can they pay?"

"Aye, aye; I'm got moine all square. Moine warn't much. I dra'd it out, though—all goold." And he tapped his pocket.

"Goold, mun—arl goold? That looks 'nation bad, that do!"

"Whoy, Bill?" demanded Stubbs. "They can't pay'ee in nothint better nor goold, can 'em?"

"Looks 'nation bad, though, neighbor—tell'ee whoy. It's arl over with 'em—now, taak my word furrit. Bank of England won't troost 'em wi' no more notes—that's whoy they pays arl in goold."

And this version was believed in, and helped to smash Melliship's.

Then Mr. Sanderson, telling his assistant to be as slow as possible in paying checks, but to preserve the appearance of alacrity and readiness began to converse with the crowd—every one of whom he knew personally—who were waiting their turn to be paid. To his dismay, it grew thicker; and those who pressed at the door were more impatient than those who first entered. But as very few of those who got to the front knew the amount of their

balances, and as this had in every instance to be ascertained, payment took place slowly.

"What a dreadful thing it is!" said Mr. Sanderson, in a stage whisper. "They say he was affected by the success of his own enterprise."

People inside heard this, and began to wish they had not been so hasty. But the pressure went on increasing from without.

"Yes; and to look at the crowd here, one would think there was reason to doubt Melliship's bank. Really, gentlemen at the door, you must have patience. Every one in his turn. We shall attend to your business as soon as we possibly can. Jones, here is old Mrs. Clarke. Ladies first. Now do not let Mrs. Clarke wait."

Mrs. Clarke was deaf, extremely stupid, and always disputed the accuracy of every account. She had come to draw out all her money, including the odd half-pence, and was likely to keep the clerk Jones occupied for a good quarter of an hour. First her passbook had to be compared with their ledger. Next, she had to be heard in support of her belief that she had more money than their books showed.

Mr. Sanderson stepped into the manager's room. Frank was standing before the fire, anxious and dejected.

"Mr. Frank, we can't go on—we can't indeed, unless help comes from the bank. In half an hour we shall be at the end of our resources, unless the tide turns. God grant it may!"

"Ghrimes promised to be here as soon as he could. We can do nothing but hope. Send round a clerk for him."

But as they spoke Mr. Ghrimes appeared in the bank, having entered from the back. A murmur of relief ran through the expectant crowd as they saw him—for "Mortiboy's Ghrimes" was trusted implicitly in Market Basing. And then people began to look at each other, and to feel as if they were doing a very foolish thing.

"What is all this crowd about?" asked Ghrimes of one of the clerks, running his fingers through his stubby iron-gray hair, and looking right through the people, as if he had never seen one of them before in his life.

"We want our money, sir," said one of them, less sheepish than the rest.

"Oh! do you?" growled Mortiboy's manager. "Then you had better take it; and don't come to our place with it, if that's the way you intend to inconvenience your bankers at a time of domestic calamity. Pay them all their money as quick as you can, Mr. Jones, and let them go."

The applicants, who, as yet, were chiefly the trades-people of the place,

were moved by this rebuke; and two or three declared their intention of letting the money "be." But these were few, and the rest only pressed on to the counter. Ghrimes might be right; but after all money was money, and if that wasn't safe, there was no knowing what would happen next. For popular notion of banking in the Market Basing mind was that the banker kept all the money in gold, in cellophane or strong boxes; that to use it, or take it out for any purpose save that of returning it to its rightful owner, would be akin to embezzlement. How bankers lived they never inquired.

Mr. Ghrimes pushed into the back room.

Frank gave a sigh of relief.

"It is all right, my dear boy," he said. "Go on paying them, Mr. Sanderson. They are putting up the gold at our place for you. As fast as you pay it out, the people bring it over to us; so that it is all right, and you can meet any number of their demands."

"But not any number of bills," said Mr. Sanderson.

"Do not let us meet trouble half-way," said Mr. Mortiboy's manager. "Our first business is to stop the mouths of those fools outside. Let one of your clerks be ready to receive and weigh when our men come over."

Mr. Sanderson went back to his counter with a lighter heart.

I've had a terrible time with the old man," said Ghrimes. "He seems knocked off his head with this dreadful news. I could not get him to consent to any thing. At last his son Dick made him give way. He hardly understood, I think."

It was quite true. The shock of Mr. Melliship's death had been almost more than Mr. Mortiboy could bear. He had gone to bed light-hearted and happy. He had got up in the morning still happier: for the day was come at last when his rival—the man he had hated—would be in his power. He desired no more. In his power? The man who had never been as rich as he, but of so much greater weight and influence. The man whom people respected and courted, when he could get no one to do more than fear him.

Remember, he did not seek to ruin Mr. Melliship: it was not his intention to shut up his bank, even if he had the power. But it was his intention to sit alone in that grimy kitchen in the evening, and reflect that the proud man was humble before him. Now the day was come, and the proud man—too proud for humiliation—had escaped by the only gate open to him. So that when Mr. Mortiboy heard the news, his heart felt like lead within him, and a cloud

that never lifted again fell upon his brain.

He was sitting pale and speechless when Ghymes came for authority to stop the run. But he could at first only be got to answer incoherently.

"Eleven thousand five hundred and seventy-five pounds! The bills are due this morning at twelve o'clock. I knew he could not meet it. I told you so, Ghymes. You can't say I did not tell you so? Well, then, nobody can blame me. Francis Melliship was mad—mad at your Aunt Susan's funeral—was not even dressed like a man in his senses—I see it now, too late! Eleven thousand pounds, Dick. They were lodged with us for safe custody. Eleven thousand pounds! Poor Francis Melliship! We were boys together, Dick; and I married his sister—your mother, poor thing! And Susan always had a kind word for him, though we were not the best of friends. And now it's come to this. He's quite dead, you said, Dick?"

"Dead as a ninepin," said his son.

"Yes. They're all gone—they're all gone."

"Mr. Mortiboy, time presses. There's a run on Melliship's, I tell you. Can't we make him understand, Mr. Richard?"

"Look here, sir," said Dick shaking him gently by the shoulder, "there's a run upon their bank, and if you don't stop it, the bank will stop; and then there'll be a run upon yours; and if that stops too, there will be the devil to pay, and no mistake. So you had better say 'Yes' to Mr. Ghymes. I'm witness enough."

The old man muttered a feeble "Yes," and then went on maundering.

So Ghymes went away.

Before, however, any help was actually needed at Melliship's, a singular thing happened. For at first those who drew their money from Melliship's took it across the road—it was only beyond the church on the other side—to Mortiboy's in order to deposit it there. There were thus two rivulets of people—the larger going to Melliship's, the smaller to Mortiboy's. But presently Mortiboy's depositors, seeing the double stream, began to imagine that there was a run upon both banks; and a panic set in both directions.

This was half-past eleven, when the town was filled with people; for it was the first day of the assizes, and the news of Mr. Melliship's death was spreading in all directions. People in gigs quietly jogging into Market Basing from north, south, east, and west, were overtaken by others driving wildly for dear life.

"Haven't you heard? Melliship's bank has smashed, they say."

The main street was blocked with vehicles. My lord judge, riding with the high sheriff and his chaplain in Sir Harbury Nobottle's grand carriage, was nearly upset; and for the first time within the memory of living men, the twelve javelin men, walking in martial array by the sides of the carriage, were of use. They pointed their antiquated weapons at the crowd, and protected his lordship from the indignity of being jostled by the farmers' chaises.

At the judge's lodgings, by the Court House, only three or four ragged urchins were present to hear the imposing fanfare of the liveried trumpeters, and see his lordship get out.

The ceremonious pageant of the Law was neglected. Every man rushed to the bank, whether he had any thing there or not.

The consternation was universal. It came home to all. The panic spread like wildfire. Country people swelled the crowd of residents in the town, surging round the doors of the old bank. The game was every man for himself; *saute qui peut*. So they pushed and shoved one another like mad people.

Let money be at stake, to see human nature with the paint off.

As the clock of St. Giles's struck twelve there were as many people besieging Mortiboy's, at the new bank, as there were trying to gain an entrance at Melliship's.

It was some little time before Mr. Ghymes could clearly understand that the panic was going to affect their house as well as the other: the thing seemed too absurd.

It was so, however; and, with a heavy heart, he stopped the transfer of the gold to Melliship's, and sent a hasty messenger to Derngate, whither Dick Mortiboy had gone, to beg him to bring his father to the bank without a moment's delay.

At five minutes after twelve, Frank received a note from Mr. Ghymes. It said,—

"We cannot help you: the panic has attacked us. There is a run on us now: we shall want every sovereign we have got."

Frank handed the note over, with a look of despair, to Mr. Sanderson, who read it; then sat down and pulled out his pocket-handkerchief, and wiped his brow.

"It will be over, Mr. Frank," he said, "in a few minutes."

"You mean that we shall have paid out all our money."

"Every farthing. We have just cashed some heavy checks. After that we must put the shutters up, and then we must examine the books, and find out our liabilities."

ties, and — and — please God — go on again."

Then a loud voice was heard from the street, which Frank knew well. It was his cousin's, John Heathcote.

"Now then, let me pass please — let me pass. I am going to pay my money in."

"It's no good, Mr. Frank," whispered Sanderson. "What he can bring can do nothing for us. We must stop."

"Stay," said Frank, "I must say a word first."

He went out. At the sight of his tall figure, and his pale and suffering face, a stillness fell upon all who saw him.

"My friends," said Frank, "you must go away. We cannot pay you to-day, because we have no more money in the house; nor can I tell you when you will be paid. But you will be paid, be sure of that."

"You will be paid," echoed Mr. Sanderson.

"I promise you, in the name of my poor father, who lies dead up stairs, that rather than one of you shall lose a farthing by us, if the worst comes to the worst, we will strip ourselves of every thing in the world. But go quietly now, because we have no money left."

They were awe-stricken by his solemnity. They could not murmur, because his trouble was so great, at their own probable or possible losses. Some of them went out with streaming eyes — all of them without a word. And then the iron shutters were let down, and the door closed — and Melliship's bank had stopped.

A very different scene went on at the other house. The news of the run on his bank acted on the old man like cold water on a fainting woman. He left off maundering to his son, raised his head erect, and looked in sheer wonder at the messenger who brought him the news. A run on his bank? on Mortiboy's? The thing was impossible, absurd! As well expect the whole race of sheep to assert their independence, or the infant in arms to demand a separate establishment, as that his customers should dare to distrust him.

He rose, and grasped his stick in a menacing manner, as if the appearance of that weapon alone would restore confidence; and placing his hat firmly on his head, he walked out of the house followed by Dick.

As he marched down the street, — his step firm, his bearing confident, his aspect stern, — the people fell back right and left, and those who were hurrying to his bank to draw out their deposits, slackened their steps, and allowed him to go on first.

The whole street front was blocked with people.

"You had better go round by the back way, sir," suggested a bystander, in a meek whisper.

Old Mortiboy turned upon him like a wild cat, gnashing and gnawing with her teeth.

"Who the devil asked for your advice?" he gasped out, and passed straight on to the front entrance, blocked up as it was. They fell back to make way as his tall, thin figure passed through their midst, followed by his great son, Dick, — like Saul, a head taller than anybody else.

"Now," said Mr. Mortiboy, in a loud, shrill voice, "perhaps you will let me get through to my own bank, gentlemen."

There was some hesitation in the crowd.

"If I cannot get through you," said the old man, "by God! I'll have the shutters up in three minutes."

But Dick the stalwart was in front of him, clearing a path by the free use of his elbows. To get into the bank itself was a more difficult matter; for here, with every goodwill, the people were so jammed and pressed together, that they could not possibly make room. As Mr. Mortiboy put his foot upon the steps, a little slip of an old man, whose terror was almost comical, fell at his feet crying, —

"O Mr. Mortiboy, Mr. Mortiboy! don't rob me of my money! O sir! I'm a small man — I must draw it out! O sir! let me have it. I'm ruined — I'm ruined!"

"What the devil is the matter with the man?" answered Mr. Mortiboy; and then, standing on the step, and turning to the people, he made the shortest and most effective speech they had ever heard — "YOU FOOLS!" was the whole of it.

Dick caught the little man under the arms, and lifted him up high.

"By gad!" he said, "isn't it Pig-faced Barnsby?"

The crowd roared with laughter. The little man, a barber by profession, had enjoyed that appellation from some fancied resemblance between his own and a porker's face, in the memory of all who had been boys in Market Basing in Dick's time.

"Look here, my men," said Dick, "let us give Pig-face his money first. How much is it, old man?"

"Mr. Richard — sir — if you please — twenty-six pounds six and fourpence, sir. I'm only a little man. Oh, this is *serious* — this is *serious*!" he whined.

"All right. Now, make way for my father, please. Come along, Pig-faced Barnsby."

He seized him by his breeches and the collar of his coat, raised him aloft, and

carried him tortoise fashion over his head into the bank. Then he deposited him in a corner, and told him to wait patiently till he could be attended to.

Dick Mortiboy was in his father's private room. He drew back the green curtain of the door, and watched the cashiers paying away the money over the counter.

The pressure from without increased.

Melliship's bank had stopped. Men must make themselves safe. So Mr. Mortiboy's customers laid siege to his bank.

"This can't go on forever," said Dick, after looking on for a few minutes. "We shall be run out too."

"Eh? eh?" said the old man feebly.

The momentary excitement had gone by.

He was sitting in his arm-chair, low and dejected, brooding over the tragedy of the night.

"I must stop the run," said his son.

He had been thinking over old stories he had heard his father tell before he left home — of bankers who had paid in silver, in a fight against time; of an Irish story of sovereigns heated in a shovel, to appear that moment coined, and served hot and hot to the clamorous creditors.

"You will let me act for you, sir?" he said.

For Dick Mortiboy had hit upon a plan.

"Yes, Dick; yes. I leave all to you — I leave all to you. Do any thing you like."

His son rushed off to the stable-yard in Derrigate, ran up the granary steps, and carried down a pile of empty sacks on his shoulder.

They were barley sacks from the brewery. He called for assistance, and got the gardener and old Hester to help him put the sacks in two large empty boxes. They nailed down the lids. Then they drove them to the back entrance of the bank. There they emptied the boxes of their contents.

The sacks were carried into the strong room: the doors faced the counter. It was on the ground floor of the building behind the large room where the ordinary business of the bank was transacted. Housekeeper, servants, clerks, helped to ransack the house. They stuffed twenty of the sacks with bed-linen, pillows, bolsters, curtains, hangings, saw-dust, sand, paper, any thing that would make them look solid, and that they could at that moment lay their hands on. They rammed the stuffing down hard, and set the sacks in double rank opposite the door that opened into the public room ten before and ten behind.

Then Dick summoned Mr. Ghrimes, and told him what he meant to do. The man-

ager went with him to the money safe, and they took out fifty bags of sovereigns, with one hundred pounds in each; and into the mouth of each sack in the front row they poured the golden contents of five bags. The back row of sacks they tied up with strings.

Mr. Richard Mortiboy, the younger, was going to practise on the credulity of Market Basing.

If his sacks had really been full of sovereigns, they must have contained four-hundred thousand pounds; for they would have held twenty thousand pounds apiece. And who would have carried the sacks there?

I can carry four thousand sovereigns.

Dick Mortiboy could manage, at the outside, seven thousand — he was almost a giant in strength.

Hercules himself might walk off with ten thousand on his back.

But the people the spectacle was prepared for did not think of these little things.

The originator of the plan knew he might trust to their simplicity for success.

He was right.

They threw open the door, and showed the glittering metal.

The "Open Sesame" had been said; and there, before their wondering eyes, was more treasure than Ali Baba's fabled cave had held.

Gold! — Gold! — Gold! — Gold!!

Riches beyond the dreams of avarice! The sight of the dazzling heaps of specie wrought like a magical charm on the panic-stricken crowd.

They gaped, and were satisfied. Their money was all there.

Mortiboy's was saved!

Dick had stayed the run!!

CHAPTER XIV.

THREE weeks have passed since the suicide of Mr. Melliship and the failure of his bank. The town of Market Basing has in some measure recovered its tranquillity, and those who have lost money are beginning to consider that they are lucky in pulling something out of the wreck. Meantime, official assignees have taken possession of the old bank, books, papers, and assets. The bereaved and ruined family have stripped themselves of their last farthing, save a poor hundred pounds a year, the slender portion which Mrs. Melliship brought her husband, the large settlements made upon her at her marriage being absolutely surrendered for the benefit of the creditors.

For their advantage, too, the books, pictures, and furniture are to be sold.

It is the last day the Melliships have to spend in their old house. For, obeying the usual instinct of broken people, they have decided on going to London, and hiding their poverty and ruin where no one will be likely to see it. The wounded beast seeks the thickest covert, where he can die undisturbed: the stricken Briton looks for the deepest solitude, which is in the streets of infinite London, where he may brood over his sorrows and meditate fresh enterprises.

Kate Melliship goes sadly from room to room, taking her farewell of all that she has known and loved so long. There are the stately bookcases, the portfolios of prints and drawings, the music, the pianos, the very chairs and sofas which have witnessed their happy hours. Dry-eyed, but with a breaking heart, she turns over the leaves of the books and takes a last look at the pictures in the portfolios. Nothing is to be taken away. They have decided, Frank and she, because their mother is helpless, that nothing but the barest necessities of clothing can be retained by them, not even the smallest trinket, not the most precious keepsake, not the most trifling memento. Whatever happens, they will be able to say that, in the wreck of their father's house, they, too, were wrecked and lost their all. Even the ring upon her finger, with her father's hair, will to-night go into the jewel-box, and in a few days be put up for sale with the rest. Alas for this wrenching up of all the tendrils and spreading roots with which a girl's affection clings to her home! Agony as was that bitter awaking when the shrieks of the maid roused Kate from her sleep in the early morning, it almost seems as if this is worse; when every thing has to be left behind, and, of the father who cherished and loved her so tenderly, nothing will be left at all but the memory. Surely it were something to have a few books of his; to preserve some little token, the sight of which would always bring him back to mind. It is not to be; and poor Kate, too wretched for tears, sits silent and sad in the lonely, fireless room, and feels as if there were no more possibility of life, or light, or joy.

Let me try to depict her.

She is, like her brother, fair-haired; and like him, tall. Not so fascinating as Grace Heathcote, she has a certain dignity of bearing which makes her more striking in appearance. Grace is a maiden fair—Kate is a queen. Grace is a young man's goddess. For Kate, the Knight Bayard himself, when his locks were touched with

gray, and his beard grizzled with forty years, might yet have been proud to break a lance. Sweet, good, tender, and true is Grace—strong with a woman's strength, but all womanly. All this Kate is, and more, because she adds resolution, self-reliance, independence. These she has in a greater degree than her brother Frank.

While she sits with her mother in the cold drawing-room, the door is opened, and Grace Heathcote herself runs in, in her quick and impulsive way, and throws herself upon her neck.

"My Kate—my poor Kate," she cries, with the ready tears of sympathy.

Kate answers coldly,—

"We leave to-morrow. I am saying farewell to the old house."

"But you are not going to leave every thing behind you?"

"Every thing—every thing. Until every single debt is paid, Frank says we have no right even to the clothes we wear. All will be sold, Grace, dear. It seems strange. I cannot sometimes understand how a single month can make so great a difference. We were so happy then, we are so miserable now!"

"Kate, dear," whispered Grace, "I have brought a present for you, with a message for Frank."

"Who sends us presents now?"

Grace turned very red.

"It—it is from Uncle Mortiboy—your uncle, Kate. Here it is, with his best love and kind wishes."

Grace held in her hand an envelope, unsealed. In it was a Bank of England note for a hundred pounds. In their poverty and distress, a hundred pounds seemed to her a large sum. It was the very first gift of any kind they had ever received from their uncle.

"Did he send it of his own free will, Grace?"

Grace nodded with pertinacity.

"Did no one suggest it to him, Grace?"

Grace shook her head violently, blushing very red.

"Did you suggest it? No? It seems very kind of him—very kind indeed of him," said Kate. "But you must ask Frank if we could accept it."

"Yes," said her mother. "Frank manages for us now. I am hardly consulted about any thing; and poor Frank's ideas are so unworldly and boyish. O my poor dear husband! O Francis, Francis, to think that you should have had such an end!"

The widowed lady sobbed as if her heart would break, and fell back on the ottoman she was sitting on.

"Go," whispered Kate to Grace. "You will find Frank down stairs."

A little while before, Grace would have romped all over the house after Frank; but since that conversation of theirs in the lane at Hunslope, her feelings were altered very much. Now she was very coy; and her little heart beat fast as she tapped lightly at the door of the room Frank had from boyhood called his own.

His voice said, "Come in."

Grace entered his sanctum blushing, and looking all the more lovely for it.

She gave Frank her hand to shake; with the other, she held the note in her pocket.

Now, though it is hard to do it, the truth must be told, that, in this business of the hundred pounds, Grace Heathcote had been deceiving Kate grossly. Such was the fact.

She went to call upon her uncle with the secret intention of asking him to do something for the Melliships — what, she did not know. She found the old man in a peevish and irritable frame of mind. He was ailing in body, besides, and had had a stormy interview that morning with Ghrimes, his manager, who had dared to put in a word for the unfortunate Melliships. Mr. Mortiboy softened a little at sight of his favorite niece; but his face grew hard as the nether millstone when she told him on what errand she had come.

"Who sent you?" he cried angrily. "Who told you that they had any claim upon me?"

"Nobody, my dear uncle. I came by myself."

He began to walk up and down the room, muttering, —

"I had nothing to do with his death — nothing. I could not prevent it. I did not foresee it. I shall lose money as it is through it, I dare say. He has upset every thing. No, girl — I cannot do any thing for them. I must be just — just before I am generous."

Grace knew Mr. Mortiboy well enough to know that when he talked in this way his resolution was final. She sighed, and tried another tack.

"I suppose, dear uncle," — the little deceiver put her lovely arm around him — "you would not object to helping them indirectly? I mean if it were at no expense of — of justice."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, uncle, do you remember the kind and generous gift you made me — of a whole hundred pounds — only three weeks ago, when you dined with us? Now, that is mine, is it not? Well, I want to give that to my cousins."

"The girl's mad!"

"And for them not to know that it comes from me. So, if you don't mind, dear uncle, giving it me back again, we can manage in this way very well. You shall sign a check — a piece of paper — for it, which I will give to them, and tell them it comes from you."

Here was an opportunity of being generous, as Grace had put it, without the infringement of those bulwarks of justice with which Mr. Mortiboy loved to surround a mean and selfish action. The girl, of course, was Quixotic, mad and romantic; but, then, it was always the way of girls; and, of course, if she insisted on it — if she was quite sure it was the only way, and if she was quite sure that Kate would not suspect — he was ready to give way. He wrote the check, gave it to Grace, and saw her depart on her errand of mercy and charity with quite a glow at his own heart, as if he had done it himself.

So he had. He had gained a reputation on the first gift to Grace which was now going to be doubled, at no greater expense, by the second — the only drawback being that it had really cost him a hundred pounds. Now, Mr. Mortiboy would have preferred a reputation for generosity which had cost him nothing at all.

But all this was a secret from Frank. To conceal any thing from him was very painful to Grace, and she felt awkward and embarrassed. She wanted to get the affair of the present over at once; but, when she tried to approach the subject, her heart fluttered so that she dared not venture to begin about it.

So she stood there — rooted, it seemed, to the spot on which she had taken her stand when she entered the room. Her eyelashes lay in a black fringe on her cheeks — Frank could not see a bit of her eyes — and her manner was restrained, and not at all like Grace Heathcote's usual demeanor.

"Frank."

"Grace."

And then neither spoke.

The poor boy looked at the carpet, the ceiling, and at his mistress's face, and thought to read his fate there. But Grace stood inscrutable as the sphinx. They had not met since the day of that walk in the Hunslope lane, when Mr. Frank professed his love. What painful events had happened to both since that afternoon! Yet the memory of it rushed into their hearts at the same moment, and they blushed like children.

They stood for a few moments in silence.

"There have been words between us, Grace," said Frank, "that must be as if they had never been said."

"That cannot be," said Grace firmly.
 "We cannot unsay."

"Then we must forget."

"We cannot forget," said the girl. "Tell me, Frank, what you mean, plainly. Tell me all that is in your heart. Do you love me no longer?"

"My love, my darling! I love you better—a thousand times better; but it is because you are so far off from me. Do you know that I am a beggar—that the very clothes I stand in belong properly to our creditors? Grace, I dare not think of love. Yet how hard it is to forget! I have first to pay my father's creditors—how, I do not know. It is my sacred duty. I swore it. I must keep my oath. It will be my life's work. But you, Grace,—my dear, dear girl,—forget me. Let me go and toil on without nursing an idle hope. Release me; help me to tear away every illusion, so that I may face the reality. I am a pauper indeed; for I am stripped of more than money—I must give you back your love."

As he spoke this, his voice shook with emotion. With the last word he broke down.

Grace looked up in his eyes, bent upon her with his soft, sad gaze. A tear stood in them.

"What, Frank, is a woman's love such a light thing that it can be taken up and given back at any moment? For shame, sir! Do you think it is not till the wedding service that we take each other for better, for worse? For shame, Frank! Do you suppose that I love you less because you have no more money? You silly boy! Don't you think I love you more because you are unhappy, and because—O Frank!—Frank!"—

And here she dropped her head upon his shoulder. There was nobody by to see her.

It is five minutes later. The interval has been spent in their mingled tears and kisses. Their lips separate, their arms drop from each other's; but by this, their second sacrament of love, the twain are henceforth one.

"I shall tell them myself," whispered Grace, "and to-night. I shall write to you if I can get permission; but I must not without. And now, Frank—my Frank—we must part. You will trust me, Frank? Kiss me, and tell me again that you love me."

"I love you, Grace, I love you—I love you! O God! when shall I tell you so again?"

Then Grace told Frank the story of the bank note she had brought in her pocket to give him.

When the name of Mr. Mortiboy was mentioned, Frank flushed with agitation, and refused to soil his fingers with any of the money of his uncle.

"My father's enemies are mine," he said, looking, it must be confessed, very manly and noble; for Frank Melliship was a fine fellow.

This forced the truth from Grace.

She told him old Ready-money did not give the hundred pounds. It was her money, and he only had charge of it for her; and if she had a hundred thousand million of hundred-pound notes, all were Frank's; but this was all she had got. She laid it at his feet, and so on.

Pride at last gave way, and Frank pocketed the note.

"I consent to take it, Grace, on trust, to hold it for Kate and my mother. I will never touch a penny of it, nor shall they, unless we want bread. Some day, Grace,"—he was enthusiastic, and his eyes flashed—"when I am rich and famous, I shall give you back this note, and claim your hand."

He held out his arm, looked at his clenched fist, and shook it, as one who means to move the world.

Grace tried to pull down his arm. All she said was,—

"Silly boy!"

But she liked to see him brave and ready to fight the world—for her.

They were disturbed by the voice of Kate Melliship. She was calling Grace's name as if she was not sure where she would find her. She had her own womanly instinct to tell her that there was something of a very private nature going on between them.

"Come, Grace, dear," she said, "here is your father come to see poor mamma, and he has sent me to find you."

Grace kissed Kate, called her sister, looked farewell at Frank, and sailed out of the room with her arm round sister Kate's neck.

Frank had several visitors that day. One was his cousin, Dick Mortiboy.

"When do you go away, all of you?" he asked.

"To-morrow."

"Send me your address, Frank, will you? Promise that for old times. Dick Mortiboy never forgets old friends, my boy—nor old enemies. It is not always possible to pay back old scores to either; but I do my best. There are not many men between this and the Pacific who have done me a mischief that go about comfortable and easy in their minds. Well, let us have the address, for your father's sake. Many

is the tip I have had from him in the days when tips were scarce."

Frank promised; and Dick, shaking hands with him, strode off.

John Heathcote was another visitor.

"But what are you going to do, my boy?" he asked Frank.

"I don't know. I hope something will turn up."

"Something turn up, indeed! Yes: and you may be a clerk in a bank at a hundred a year, with permission to marry when you get a hundred and fifty. No, no; we must find something for you, Frank, my boy."

Mr. Heathcote pressed his hand, and took his leave. Folded in a packet was the farmer's present — the same as his daughter's, a note for a hundred pounds — which he left in Frank's hand, like a physician's fee. Frank's heart was full. He had more than half a mind to tell Mr. Heathcote of his relation to his daughter; but he could not. He sat and buried his face in his hands, in that same chair where his father had sat a month before, with wild eyes gazing upon the imaginary spectre. Presently, when his thoughts were too oppressive for him to bear, he seized his hat and went out to drive away some of his care and sorrow by dint of physical exertion.

He took a walk up the Hunslope Road. A mile out of Market Basing stands Queen's Cross, one of the monuments erected by King Edward to the memory of Eleanor. From the little hill that the cross stands on, there is a fine view of the town. Frank stood contemplating the familiar prospect, when he was aware of somebody standing by his side.

It was Grace. He took her hand, and pressed it tenderly in his.

"I came on first," she said. "The carriage will be here directly. Papa was talking a long time at the Angel to Mr. Mortiboy, and I walked on; and I have walked and walked, till you see I have got as far as this."

As she spoke, the Heathcotes' sociable drove up, and stopped to take up Grace and set down old Mr. Mortiboy, whose foundry was behind the hill, within a quarter of a mile of the cross.

Frank was to have one more meeting that day.

His uncle sat by the side of John Heathcote, with his long, lean, bending figure; and his outstretched arm looked in the dim twilight like some bird of prey.

"So," said he, in his creaking voice, "you go away to-morrow, young gentleman, I hear; you go to-morrow."

"We do, Mr. Mortiboy."

"Well, I hope that you will prosper and — and get money, and take care of it — not like your poor father."

"If my father did spend money, he knew how to spend it on good and worthy objects, Mr. Mortiboy," retorted Frank hotly.

"Ay, ay; we all knew Francis Melli-ship."

"I will have nothing said about my father from you," said Frank. "You were always his enemy. You took a pleasure in going up and down the town saying spiteful things of him. You envied him, Mr. Mortiboy. When he was richest, you had treble his wealth; and though you care more for money than for any other mortal thing, you envied him. You saw how people loved and respected him; and you looked in vain round Market Basing to find a soul that either loved or respected you. Do not dare to speak, sir, of a dead man whom you might have saved. Yes, Mr. Mortiboy, there is a letter lying on the study table now — an unfinished letter — telling me that you might have saved him. Do not dare, sir, to speak of the man whose death you have compassed."

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Mortiboy. "Upon my word! Now this is pretty peacockery!"

Nevertheless, though the old man's words were brave, his cheeks were white, and his fingers trembled. The blow had struck home more deeply than his nephew thought.

Mr. Heathcote caught Frank by the arm.

"Don't, Frank!" he cried. "What's the good?"

Mr. Mortiboy raised himself erect. He was taller than Frank, and it always gives a man a moral advantage to be able to point downwards.

He shook his forefinger solemnly, two inches in front of Frank's nose.

"Young man," he said, "it ill becomes one of your years and inexperience to speak of things of which you know nothing. Some day you will be sorry for what you have said. Go home now, and see your sister. You will be sorry for what you have said this very evening. I wish you well, sir."

Mr. Mortiboy, it will be seen, alluded to the hundred-pound check of Grace's. The old man did not know that Frank had been told the truth. It was gracefully done, and conveyed an expression — dim and vague, but vast — of secret generosity, which affected Frank disagreeably. He felt as if he had been speaking too hastily, and, wishing Grace and her father good-night, without another word, went home.

CHAPTER XV.

To London! Cry of the young and ambitious. Let those who will sit at home, grub for money piece by piece, die and be forgotten. To London! battle-field where glory is to be won, gold-diggings richer than any in California, diamond fields more fertile than any in Natal,—the place to make fortunes, to repair ruin, to hide disgrace, to realize dreams, to bury shame. No fable is it, invented for the delusion of youth — that of the rich man who came to London with a single sixpence in his pocket. It is a reality which happens every day. Nor does it matter whether the beginning be made with a sixpence or a hundred pounds; for the end is certain to him who has brains, and pluck, and patience.

The widow with her two children, and such small impedimenta as remained from the general wreck, came to London. They had their modest one hundred pounds a year, Mrs. Melliship's dowry at her marriage; they had, besides, two hundred pounds in cash. A small stock to start with; but Frank and Kate had youth and hope.

"We will paint pictures, Kate," said Frank, "and sell them. I would give the world to be a great painter. We will get hung in the Royal Academy, and all the world will run to buy."

Kate smiled.

"Find me subjects, Frank, and find me strength and skill."

"You have at least the genius," said her brother.

It was true. Kate Melliship had been taught as carefully as Market Basing professors could teach; though it had not been possible, in a country town, to give her those lessons in painting which are essential to making a finished artist. And she had genius, which her brother had not. While Frank's drawings were sometimes stiff and always weak, hers were vigorous and free. If her conceptions were generally too difficult for her powers of execution, they were always artistic and genuine. Art was her passion. To be an artist for bread would bring no sense of shame with it, but rather of pride, as it ought. The only thing was to find out how to make bread out of it.

They took lodgings in South Kensington near the Museum, and began to work. Mrs. Melliship, with a view of doing something to help the family, wrote secretly to a certain first cousin, her nearest relation. The first cousin sent her a ten-pound note, throwing the money to them like a bone to a dog. Kate made her mother prom-

ise to write no more begging letters and said nothing to Frank about it.

This was the dreariest period in Kate Melliship's life. Her mother always in tears, or querulously comparing things present with things of old; Frank alternately in enthusiastic hopes of success and sheer despair; and her own work going on all too slowly for her impatience. They were exiles, too, and not yet settled into acquiescence with their lot.

"*Nos dulcia luquimus arva,
Nos patriam fugimus,*"

they might have cried, had any one of the three known so much Latin, or found any consolation in applying it. Some women, if any thing goes wrong, find a text in the Bible which fits their case, and are immediately comforted and consoled. It does not help them with any advice, it does not show them that they are punished for their own faults, it does not promise any thing for the future; but then it is a text: and the feminine heart, after receiving it, feels soothed and warm, like a cold man with a glass of brandy and water. Kate was not one of these women. She had the bravery to look things in the face. Her mother was not one of these women, because she never looked any thing in the face.

Frank, too, in spite of his enthusiasm, had moments when his courage failed. At night, Kate would hear him walking to and fro far into the small hours. This was when he was haunted with the thought of failure, knowing that on success depended his hopes of Grace — battling with the temptation to ask of silent Heaven, *why*: that *why* which every innocent victim of sin and folly is tempted to ask, so that the Giver of all good is perpetually assailed with reproach that he has given evil.

"Is it not hard, Kate?" he would ask sometimes, when his mother had gone to bed — "Is it not hard?" — selfish in his sorrow. "All was in my grasp. Grace loved me; we were rich; we" —

"Don't look back, Frank dear. Look forward. She loves you still. If she is worth having, she will wait."

"Wait? Look here, Kate" — he tore the cover from a picture he had just finished. "This is the kind of daub which is to make me famous, is it?"

"Indeed, Frank, it is not bad. Your coloring is always rather cold." She bent over it, trying to find points for praise, but there were none. "At any rate, you can copy."

"And earn about fifty pounds a year."

He was not always in this hopeless mood. Sometimes he was ready to laugh over lit-

the privations which had become necessary in their diminished means. It was in the time of that celebrated series of letters in the *Daily Telegraph* which showed how a man can marry, bring up ten children in luxury, be the proud proprietor of a pew, and save sixpence per annum to meet contingencies, all on eighty pounds a year; and he would read out the details, applying them to their own case, till Mrs. Melliship would be astonished by hearing their old laughter almost as loud and bright as before. At twenty-four, one can't be always crying, even though things do look hopelessly bad.

"I can't do any thing with it, Kate," said Frank, ruefully contemplating his grand classical picture, "The death of Antigone," which he had begun with such confidence and pride. "I shall never be a painter. What shall I try next? The more I look at that stiff-necked Antigone, the more I hate her. Shall I advertise for a post as light-porter? Look at her eyes: she squints. Shall I become a photographer's tout? Aid me, my wise sister, with counsel."

But Kate had none to give.

As the slow, cold spring crept on, Mrs. Melliship's health began to decline. More trouble for poor Kate. She did not dare tell Frank that the London confinement was telling upon their mother, so she waited, hoping and fearing, and working bravely while the weeks crept by. Grace and Lucy Heathcote wrote to her.

Lucy's letters were all about Grace. Grace was becoming more womanly; she thought she was paler than she used to be; she was more thoughtful, and seemed more religious.

Grace wrote about things in general. She did not disguise from Kate the hard battle she always had with her mother. The girls, indeed, had never been greatly influenced by Mrs. Heathcote, inferior as she was to her daughters in point of both education and feeling.

"Tell Frank," she wrote, "that I have promised papa not to write to him. I told him, too, that I was going to send him messages. Tell him, dear Kate, that he is to go on loving me, if he can; for I shall always love him. He is not to be worried if he does not succeed at first, because I can wait, and he is not to be impatient."

"My mother and I had a scene yesterday. Poor Lucy only cried. It was about Cousin Dick. You know poor mamma's insane idea that Dick wants to marry me."

"Pray, how long are you going to encourage Dick's attentions?" she asked me.

"Until I find out he is paying me attentions," I replied.

"Then she said things that made me go out of the room, and I refused to go back until papa came home. Dick, indeed!"

"Dick is a real good fellow, though, and I like him tremendously. He is good-natured, as big men always are, and never in the way like little men. Pray, Kate, how is it that little men take up so much more room than big men? He says wonderful things, too; and invents stories, if you ask him for an anecdote, as if he was a Trollope. I hold up my finger, and say, 'Dick, a Mexican story.' And he begins at once quite gravely, 'When I was in Texas,' and then always something new. He confessed to me the other day, that he invents. Mamma says he is a young man of excellent religious principles. If so, my dear, he takes care to keep his light hidden, for he never goes to church, wanted once to play cards on Sunday, smokes cigars all day if he can, and I once heard him swear at Silly Billy till the poor man turned white. But I like Dick. Here he comes, and I am going to be shown the lasso trick; wait till I come back."

"O Kate, my dear, Cousin Dick is an admirable Crichton. He has been throwing the lasso as they do in his beloved Texas, Lucy and I looking on. The miserable victim was a colt; its leg is hurt. Colts in this country don't understand the lasso, as I told Dick. He swore in Spanish. It sounded very deep and grand, like a church organ in a rage, not like the ugly and vulgar sounds which issue from the mouth of the rural Briton. Kate, my dear, I'm very miserable, because I can't help being happy sometimes; and I am afraid you and Frank are not. Forgive me, dear. Mamma refuses to recognize our engagement. Of course, that makes no difference. Poor old Uncle Mortiboy looks greatly changed in the last few weeks. His hand shakes, his head shakes, and he shakes all over. Lucy goes to see him oftener than I, because she is a better girl than your wicked Grace—whom you and F——love so much—and does her duty. He sits and talks perpetually about what is going to happen when he is gone."

"When I am gawn," he says in such a doleful way that you would think he was going at once. But he is quite happy when Dick is with him. He follows him with his eyes. He cannot bear to spend his evenings without him. Dick, like a good creature, sits and talks with his father every night of his life. . . . I've told you all the gossip I know. Papa wants me to give his love to you, and tell Frank to keep a good heart. The dear old man! I had a walk and a talk with him yesterday

all over the ploughed fields, and came back with mud up to my eyes. I told him what I tell you, that I love Frank, and I shall never marry anybody else, even if anybody should ask me. Cousin Dick, indeed!

"Please give my kind remembrances, and Lucy's and mamma's, to Mrs. Melliship and to Mr. Frank Melliship — is that cold enough for you? — and send me a long and happy letter."

Dick was not without his troubles. The old man bored him almost beyond endurance. To make the evenings livelier, he conceived the brilliant idea of keeping his father's weekly bottle of gin always half-full. Then the old man, quite unconsciously, took to drinking double and treble allowance, and would go to bed an hour earlier, staggering up the stairs. In the morning, he was tremulous and nervous. He did not like to be left alone. The death of Mr. Melliship seemed to have suddenly aged him. At night he lay awake — unless he had taken more spirit than was good for him — trembling at imaginary whispers. Ghymes, at the bank, found that his capacity for business was gone altogether; and yet he would not give up his attendance at the bank.

With all this, tighter than ever with the money. Nothing to be got out of him for any of Dick's foreign schemes. And all the more hopeless now, because the old man had only one thought — to keep his son at home.

Second trouble — Polly. Once a week or so, she came to see him. Dick went to the trysting-place with as much joy as a boy goes to keep an appointment with the head-master after school. She was always gushing and affectionate; always wanting more money for little Bill; and, which was his only comfort, always afraid of him.

Third trouble — Lafleur. With his usual bad luck, this worthy had got through his share of the thousand, and was wanting more. Before long, his own would be all gone. And his promise to raise five thousand in three months! More than two of them gone. And how to raise the money?

CHAPTER XVI.

It was about this time Mr. Mortiboy took to sending for his lawyer three or four times a week. After each interview he would be more nervous, more shaken, than before. He kept the reason of these

visits a secret, even from Ghymes. But to Lucy Heathcote, with whom he spoke more frankly of himself than to any other human being, the old man told some of his perplexities.

"I am getting old, my dear, and I am getting shaky. I've a deal to trouble and worry me."

"But there is Cousin Dick, uncle."

"Yes, there's Dick. But it is all my property that's on my mind. I always intended to do something for you two, my dear — always."

"Never mind that now, uncle."

"And perhaps I ought for the young Melliships as well, though why for them I don't know. And I'm ill, Lucy. Sometimes I think I am going to die. And — and — I try to read — the — Bible at night, my dear; but it's no use — it's no use. All the property is on my mind, and I can think of nothing else."

"Shall I read to you, uncle?"

"No, child! nonsense! certainly not," he replied angrily. "I'm not a pauper."

Being "read to," whether you liked it or not, suggested the condition of such helpless impecuniosity, that he turned quite red in the face, and gasped. His breath was getting rather short.

Presently he went on complaining again.

"At night I see coffins, and dream of funerals and suicides. It's a dreadful thing to have a funeral going on all night long. I think, my dear, if I had the property off my mind, I should be better. If it was safe, and in good hands, I should be very much easier. If it was still growing, I should be lighter in my mind. Dick is very good. He sits with me every evening. But he can't be with me when I am asleep, you know, Lucy; and these dreams haunt me."

The old man passed his hand across his brow, and sighed heavily. He could not bear even to think of death: and here was death staring him in the face every night.

"I know I ought to make a will," he went on to his patient listener, Lucy, who did not repeat things — as the old man knew very well. "I ought to; but I can't, my dear. There's such a lot of money, and so many people; and after one is gone, one will be abused for not doing what was right; and — and — I haven't the heart to divide it, my dear. It's such a shame to cut property up, and split it into pieces."

"Can't you take advice, uncle?"

"I don't trust to anybody, Lucy. They're all thinking of themselves — all of them." This, as if he had been himself the most disinterested of mankind.

"There's Mr. Ghymes. You trust him, uncle?"

"Well—yes—I trust him. But then he's well paid for it, you see."

Ghrimes got £200 a year for his work, which a London employer would have considered cheap at five times that sum.

"And you trust Cousin Dick."

"Yes," said the old man, brightening up a little. "I do trust Dick. I trust my boy. He is a great comfort to me—a great comfort. He is very clever—Dick is. He has a wonderful head for business. He manages every thing well. Look what a window he got from London for your poor Aunt Susan's memorial—and for twenty pounds. Oh! Dick does every thing well, and he's a great comfort to me. But it is not only the division of the property, Lucy, think of the awful probate duty! There's a waste of money—there's a sacrifice; a most iniquitous tax, a tax upon prudence! I'm not so well off as I ought to be, my dear, not so well as my poor father thought I should be, but I've done pretty well. And the probate duty is a terrible thing to think of! it's really appalling! Two per cent. on money left to your son! Thousands will be lost! Dear me! dear me! Thousands!"

These confidences were for Lucy Heathcote alone, with whom the old man felt himself safe. No talk of property to Dick; no confessions to his son; no asking of advice; no offers of money. So far from giving or lending, Mr. Mortiboy received from Dick, every Saturday morning, a sovereign in payment for a week's board, and two shillings and three pence for a bottle of gin. While pocketing the money, the parent never failed to remind his son of the cheapness of his board, and the fact that he was charged nothing at all for bed and lodging. He always added, solemnly, that it gave him great pleasure to entertain his son, even at a loss.

As for their evenings together, they were always alike. A single candle lighted the kitchen where they sat; the father in a Windsor arm-chair, with his bottle of gin at his elbow, and a long pipe in his mouth; the son opposite him, with a short pipe and another bottle. Between them a deal table. As Dick grew tired of telling stories, he used sometimes to beguile the hours by showing his father tricks with the cards. Mr. Mortiboy, senior, did not approve of games of chance. They gave no opening for the prudent employment of capital, and risked property. Nor did he approve of so-called games of skill, such as whist; because the element of chance entered so largely into them, that, as he argued, not the richest man was safe. But his admiration was excessive when Dick—feigning, for the sake of effect, that his

father was a credulous and simple-minded person—showed how thousands might be won by the turning up of a certain card; telling which card had been touched; making cards hide themselves in pockets, and drawers, and so forth. These feats of skill, with the stories which, like a child, he loved to hear over and over again, re-kindled and inflamed Mr. Mortiboy's imagination, previously as good as dead, so that his fancy ran riot in dreams of unbounded wealth to be found in distant countries, dreams which Dick could have turned to good use had it not been for the want of nerve which had fallen upon his father after Mr. Melliship's death.

Between eight and nine, the old man, who shows signs of having taken as much gin and water as he can well carry, rises to go to bed. Dick lights his candle and watches the tall, thin figure of his father,—stooping now and bent—climbing the stairs.

He heaves a great sigh of relief, and closes the double doors which connect the kitchen, built out at the back, with the rest of the house.

"What has the old woman got for me?" says Dick, unlocking a cupboard. "Steak again. Well, where's the gridiron?"

The economical principles on which Mr. Mortiboy's household was conducted generally left his son an exceeding hungry man at nine o'clock; and, by private arrangement with old Hester, materials for supper were always secretly left out for him.

Dick deftly cooks the steak, drinks a pint of stout, and producing a bottle of brandy from the recesses of the cupboard, mixes a glass of grog, and smokes a pipe before going to bed.

"It's infernal hard work," he sighs to himself; "and something ought to come of it, or what the devil shall I do with *La fleur*?"

Then came a letter from that gentleman Bad news, of course; had been to Paris, done capitally with his System for a time. Turn of luck; not enough capital; was cleaned out. Would his partner send him more money, or would he run up to town, and bring him some?

He afterwards explained that the System was working itself out like a mathematical problem, but that he had been beguiled by the *beaux yeux* of the Countess de Parabère, in whose house was the play, and weakly allowed her to stand behind his chair. Dick quite understood the significance of this folly, and forbore to make any remark. Bad luck, indeed, affected his spirits but slightly; and he was too well acquainted with his partner to blame him

for those indiscretions which the wisest and strongest of men may fall into.

Out of the thousand pounds they brought to England, only one hundred remained. Lafleur, in three months, had had eight hundred; Polly, nearly a hundred; and a hundred remained in the bank. Dick, in this crisis, drew out fifty, and went up to town with it.

Lafleur was in his lodgings in Jermyn Street, sitting at work on his System—an infallible method of breaking the banks. He had a pack of cards, and a paper covered with calculations. Occasionally he tested his figures, and always, as it appeared, with satisfactory results. At present he was without a shilling, having lost the last in an attempt to win a little money at pool, at which he had met with provokingly bad luck.

"I have brought you something to carry on with for the present," said Dick, "and we must talk about the future."

Lafleur counted the money, and locked it up.

"Permit me to remind my Dick," he said, in his softest accents, "that the three months are nearly up."

"I know," replied Dick gloomily.

"Let us go and dine. You can sleep here to-night, if you like, there is a spare room; and we can have a little game of cards."

They dined; they came back; they had a little game of cards. At midnight, Lafleur turned his chair to the fire, and, lighting a cigarette, looked at his friend with an expression of inquiry.

"Après, my Richard."

Dick stood before the fire in silence for a while.

"Look here, Lafleur. Did I ever break a promise?"

"Never, Dick. Truthful James was a fool to you."

"Very well, then. Now, listen to me."

He told how his father was falling into dotage; how he held tighter than ever to his money, how the old man grew every day more fond of him, and how he must, at all hazards, contrive to hold on.

"The property is worth half a million at least, Lafleur. Think of that, man. Think of five hundred thousand pounds—two and a half million dollars—twelve and a half million francs? The old man keeps such a grip upon it that I can touch nothing. Makes me pay him a pound a week for my grub. But I *must* hold on. It would be madness to cross or anger him now. You must wait, Lafleur."

"I will wait, certainly. Make your three months, six, if you like, or nine, or twelve. Only, how are we to live, mean-

time? Get me some money, Dick, if it is only a few hundreds. Can't you get his signature to a bank check? or—or—copy his signature?"

"No; quite impossible. He hardly ever draws a check; and Ghrimes would know at once."

"Cannot the respectable Ghrimes be squared. No? Ah! Are there no rents that you can receive?"

"None. Ghrimes has a system, I tell you."

"Is there nothing in the house, Dick?"

Dick started. The man had touched on a secret thought. Something in the house? Yes; there was something. There was the press in his father's bedroom, the keys of which were always in old Ready-money's possession. There were gold cups and, silver cups in it, plate of all kinds, jewelry and diamonds; and there was, he knew, at least one bag of gold. Something in the house? He looked fixedly at Lafleur without answering.

Lafleur lighted another cigarette, and, crossing his legs with an easy smile, asked casually,—

"Is it money, Dick?"

Dick's face flushed, and his eyebrows contracted. Somehow, he had got out of sympathy with the old kind of life.

"I don't know for certain. I think there is money. Gold and silver things, diamonds and pearls. No one knows the existence of the bureau but myself. But I will not do it, Lafleur. I cannot do it. The risk is too great."

"Then you shall not do it, my partner. I will do it."

He went to his desk, and took out a little bottle, which he placed in Dick's hands.

"I suppose," he said, holding it lovingly up to the light, "that you are not ignorant of the admirable and useful properties of morphia. This delightful fluid—which contains no alcohol, like laudanum—will send your aged parent into so profound a slumber, that his son may safely abstract his keys for an hour or so, and give them to me. I should only borrow the gold, for the rest would be dangerous. The risk of the affair, if properly conducted, would be simply nothing. Or, another method, as the cookery books say. Let us get an impression of the keys in wax. That you can do easily. I know a locksmith—a gentle and amiable German, in Soho—whose only desires are to live blamelessly, and to drink the blood of kings. He will make me a key. You will, then, on a certain night, make all arrangements for my getting into the house."

"Is that stuff harmless?"

"Perfectly. I will take some myself to-night, if you like."

"Lafleur, I will have no violence."

"Did you ever see me hurt any one?"

"No, by gad!" cried Dick, with a laugh. "But you've sometimes stood by, and seen me hurt people."

It had indeed been Dick's lot to get all the fighting, though it was hardly delicate to remind his partner of the fact.

"It is true," he said, with a slight flush. "There are many gentlemen in the United States and elsewhere who bear about them the marks of your skill. I will not harm your father, Dick. As for the money, it will be all yours some day, you know. And he can't spend it."

"I don't want to hear arguments about taking it," said Dick. "I want it, and you want it; and that's enough. But, I will not run any risk, if I can help it. Good heavens, man! think of letting half a million slip through your fingers for want of a little patience."

"My dear Dick, I will manage perfectly for you. Make me a plan of the house. Get me a bed, because I am a commercial traveller. Let me have a map of the roads between the station and the house."

"There are two stations. You can arrive at nine-thirty, despatch your business, and take the night train by the other station to Crewe, at eleven-thirty."

"Better and better. Now for the plan."

With pen and paper, Dick proceeded to construct a plan and sketch of his father's house. The bedroom was one of the three rooms on the first floor, the other two being empty. At the back of the house was a window opening on the garden. Old Hester slept in a garret at the top; Dick, himself, in Aunt Susan's room, on the second floor. Neither was likely to hear any little noise below.

"My father never locks his door, in case of fire," said Dick, completing his plans. "All you will have to do is to walk in, and open the press which stands here, where I mark it in black lines. You cannot make a mistake about the door, because the other rooms are locked. And don't take out a single thing except the money. When shall it be?"

"As soon as we can get the key made."

"Good! I'll administer the morphia, and get the key for an impression. To-night is the first: we had better say in about a fortnight."

"Say this day a fortnight, unless you write any thing to the contrary—the fifteenth."

The pair, sitting at the table, with pencil and paper, arranged their plans quickly enough. In half an hour, Lafleur put the

papers in his pocket, and slapped his partner on the back. Dick, however, was gloomy. He was planning to rob his father the second time, and he remembered that the first had not been lucky. Like all gamblers, he was superstitious.

While his son was preparing to rob him, Mr. Mortiboy, senior, was lying sleepless in his bed, with a new determination in his head keeping him awake.

"I'll do it," he said to himself; "I'll do it. Battiscombe and Ghrimes may say whatever they like, and Lyddy may think what she likes. Dick is the proper person to have my property. He won't waste and squander. He won't be got over by sharks. He knows how to improve and take care of it. I can trust Dick."

In this world, to be believed in is to be successful; and old Mr. Mortiboy believed in Dick.

"What a son," he said, "to be proud of: what a fine son! Thank God for my son Dick!"

CHAPTER XVII.

No need of morphia to get the keys; for, the very next night, Mr. Mortiboy dropped them out of his pocket as he rose to go to bed. They lay on the chair; and his son, after dutifully escorting his sire to the foot of the stairs, went back, and took an impression of them. The operation took him three minutes and a half; and he then mounted to his father's bedroom, and gave back the bunch.

"A very dangerous thing," said Mr. Mortiboy; "a most dangerous thing; a thing I have never done before. A blessed chance, Dick, that it was you who picked them up. A providence—quite."

A Providence—perhaps: because dispensations of all sorts happen. It is not fair to lay all the good things at the feet of Providence, and none of the bad. Dick put his wax impressions in a cough-lozenge box, and sent them to Lafleur, who briefly acknowledged their receipt.

His spirits began to rise again as the time of exploit approached. He went about the house, surveying it with a critical eye, estimating the probability of Hester hearing any thing, wondering if Lafleur would do it cleverly, making calm and careful preparations. He took out two rails in the front garden at night; because the gate was always locked, and gentlemen do not like to be seen clambering over rails. He placed the ladder in readiness behind the water-butt, where it could easily be found. He rubbed candle-grease

on the window, to make it open noiselessly. He put oil into the lock of the press, when his father was at the bank. He ascertained that there was no moon on the fifteenth. He found out from a book on medicine what amount of morphia would send a man to sleep.

"And now," he said to himself, "I can't do any more. The old man shall have his draught. Lafleur shall do the trick. I will remove the ladder, and destroy the evidence; and next day there will be the devil's own row! Ho! ho! ho!"

Dick shook his sides with silent laughter as he thought of his father's rage and despair at having been robbed.

"What if I rush to the rescue? Suppose I hear a noise, run down stairs with nothing on, but a pistol in my hand, fire at Lafleur just as he gets out of window, and rush to my father's assistance! What a funk Lafleur would be in!"

But he abandoned the idea, though extremely brilliant, as too dangerous. The report of the pistol might attract a policeman.

It was impossible to tell from his behavior that any thing was in the wind. Careless and jovial by nature, he played his part without any acting. He had little anxiety about the robbery, because things were planned so well. As for misgivings and scruples of conscience, they had vanished. In place of them, he daily had before his eyes the picture of his father tearing his hair at the discovery; his own activity in the work of detection; and the imaginary searching of the house, including his own room, "by particular desire."

After all his experience of life, Dick was still only a boy, with the absence of moral principle which belongs to that time of life, all a boy's mischief, and all his fun. One of the best fellows in the world if he had his own way; one of the worst if any thing came in his way. He was big, handsome, black-bearded. He had a soft and mellow voice. He had gentle ways. He petted children. When he had the power, he helped people in distress. He laughed all day. He sang when he was not laughing. He fraternized with everybody. Men have been canonized for virtues fewer than these.

"I'll do it," said Mr. Mortiboy at night. He repeated it in the morning as he dressed. He stared very hard at Dick during breakfast. He sent for lawyer Battiscombe after breakfast, and repeated it to him.

"I'll do it at once," said the rich man.

"I have dissuaded you to the utmost of my power," said his lawyer. "It is a most irregular thing, Mr. Mortiboy. Think of *King Lear*."

"Mr. Battiscombe, do not insult my family," old Ready-money cried, in great wrath. "It is thirty years since I saw '*King Lear*' at the theatre, but I suppose it isn't much altered now. And may I ask if you mean to compare my son, my son Dick, with those — those — brazen husies?"

"Well — well — of course not. I say no more. The instrument, sir, will be ready in a day or two, and you shall sign whenever you please."

"The sooner the better, Battiscombe. Let us be ready on the fifteenth; that is Dick's birthday. He will be three and thirty. Three and thirty! What a beautiful age! Ah! Battiscombe, what a man I was at three and thirty!"

He was, indeed, a man; one who denied himself all but the barest necessities of life, and was already beginning to break his young wife's heart by neglect and meanness.

This was on the fifth of the month. There yet wanted ten days to the completion of Mr. Mortiboy's design. He spent the interval in constant talk with Dick, who could not understand what it all meant.

"Let us walk in the garden, my son," said his father. "I want to talk to you."

The days were warm and sunny, and the garden had a south aspect. The old man, with his arms behind him, stooping and bent, with his eyes on the ground, paced to and fro on the gravel; while Dick, with his hands in his pockets and a pipe in his mouth, lounged beside him. A strange contrast, not of age only, but of disposition. As the mother, so the son. Dick's light and careless nature, and his love for spending rather than saving, came from poor Emily Melliship.

"I want to tell you, my boy," said the old man — "because I know you are careful and saving, and have just ideas of property — how my great estate has been built up; how I have got money."

He told him. A long story — it took many days to tell — a story of hardness, of mean artifice, of grinding the poor man's face, and taking advantage of the credulous man's weakness; a story which made the son look down upon his father, as he shuffled beside him, with contempt and disgust.

"We're a charming family," Dick said to Lafleur one day — "a delightful family, my partner. I think, on the whole, that Roaring Dick is the best of the whole crew. Damn it all, Lafleur, I'd rather hang about gambling booths in Mexico; I'd rather loaf round a camp in California, and lay by for horses to steal; I'd rather live cheating those who would else cheat you, shooting those who would else shoot you, than live

as my respected father and grandfather have lived. Why, man, there isn't an old woman in Market Basing who does not prophecy a bad end to money got in their way, and wonder why the bad end does not come."

"All very well," said Lafleur. "But I should like to have half a million of money."

"Criminals!" growled Dick, pulling his beard. "They'd call me a criminal, I suppose, if they knew every thing. Why don't they make laws for other kinds of criminals?"

"My friend," his partner softly sighed, "do not, I implore you, begin your remembrances. Life is short, and ought not to be troubled with a memory at all."

"Perhaps it's as well as it is. By gad, we should all be in Chokee; and the virtuous ones, if there are any, would have an infernally disagreeable time of it, trying and sentencing. I should plead insufficiency of income, and an enormous appetite. What should you say?"

On the morning of the fifteenth of May, Dick received a note from Lafleur, informing him of his intention to execute their little design that evening. He twisted up the note and put it in the fire, with a chuckle of considerable enjoyment, thinking of his father's misery when he should find it out.

Mr. Mortiboy was particularly lively that morning. He chattered incessantly, running from one subject to another in a nervous, excited way.

"Be in the house at three to-day, Dick," he said solemnly. "A most important business is to be transacted, in which you are concerned. Mr. Ghymes is coming."

"Very odd coincidence," thought Dick. "There's an important business coming off to night at ten, in which you are concerned." However, he only nodded, and said he would remember.

He spent his morning in completing the arrangements for the evening, so far as any thing remained to be done. Then he went to the bank, as was his custom, and talked with the people who called on business. They all knew him by this time; and, when they had fought out their business with Ghymes, liked to have ten minutes' talk with the great traveller who dispensed his stories with so liberal a tongue.

At three o'clock, Mr. Ghymes—punctual and methodical—arrived from the bank, and Mr. Battiscombe, with a blue bag, from his office. Mr. Mortiboy heard them, and led his son by the arm to the state-room, the parlor, which had not

been used since the day of the funeral. Once more, as for an occasion of ceremony, the wine and biscuits were set out.

Mr. Mortiboy shook hands with all three, and stood on the hearth-rug, as he had stood when last they met together in that place; but this time his hand was on his son's shoulder, and his eyes turned from time to time upon him with a senile fondness.

"I am anxious," said Ghymes, with a red face, "that you"—here he looked at Dick—"should know that I have done my best to dissuade Mr. Mortiboy from this step. I think it foolish and wrong. And I have told him so."

"You have, George Ghymes—you have," said the old man.

"There is yet time, Mr. Mortiboy," urged his manager.

"Nonsense, nonsense."

Mr. Mortiboy made a sign to the lawyer, who produced a parchment from his bag, and handed it to him.

"George Ghymes," he began, "when my son Dick was supposed to be dead, John and Lydia Heathcote were my apparent heirs. Between them and their daughters—for, of course, I should not have fooled it away in memorial windows, and hospitals, and peacockery—would have been divided all my property. I can understand their disappointment. But they must also feel for the joy of a father when he receives back a long-lost son—a son like Dick, rich, prosperous, careful, and with a proper sense of money. My son Dick has been home for three months. During that time I have watched him, because I do not trust any man hastily. My son Dick has proved all that I could wish, and more. He has saved me hundreds."

"He saved the bank," interrupted Ghymes.

"He did. He has saved me thousands. He has no vices—none whatever. No careless ways, no prodigality, no desire to destroy what I have been building up. What he is now to me I cannot tell you, my friends—I cannot tell you."

He stopped to hide his emotion. The poor old man was more moved than he had ever been before, even when his wife died. Dick stared at his father in sheer amazement. What on earth was coming next?

"And there is another thing. I am getting old. My nerve is not what it was. If it were not for my son Dick, and—and,—yes, I must say that—for Ghymes, I should be robbed right and left by designing sharks, I should lose all chances of getting money. My property is too great a burden to me. I cannot bear to see it suffer from my fault. I am going to put it into abler hands than mine. My son Dick shall man-

age it; it shall be called his. Dick, my son"—here he fairly burst into tears—"take all—take all—I freely give it you. Be witness, both of you, that I do this thing in a sound state of mind and body, not moved by any desire to evade the law and save money on that awful probate duty; but solely out of the unbounded confidence I have in my son Dick." He paused again. "And now, my friends, the work of my life is finished. I hope I shall be spared for some few years to see the prosperity of my boy, to mark the growth of the property, to congratulate him when he gets money."

Yes, all was Dick's! Old Ready-money had signed a Deed of Gift passing away all his vast wealth to his son with a few strokes of his pen. The lawyer explained, while Dick was stupefied with astonishment, that he was the sole owner and holder of all the Mortiboy property. As he explained, Mr. Mortiboy sat back in his easy chair, drumming with his fingers on the arm, with a smile of intense satisfaction. Dick held the paper in his hand, and received the congratulations of the lawyer with a feeling that he was in a dream.

They went away. Mr. Mortiboy, left alone with his son, felt awkward and ill at ease. His effusion spent, and the deed done, he felt a kind of shame, as undemonstrative people always do after they have bared their hearts. He felt cold, too,—stripped, as it were.

"It will make no difference," he said in a hesitating way.

Dick only nodded.

"We shall be exactly the same as before, Dick."

He nodded again.

"I shall go out, father, and recover myself a bit. I feel knocked over by this business."

"Don't lose the deeds, Dick; give them to me to keep."

But Dick had stuffed them in his pockets, and was gone.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AFTER paying a tribute to his father's extravagant generosity by washing his throat with a wineglass of Cognac in the pantry on his way out, Dick Mortiboy strode into the garden. He felt the want of light, and space, and air to appreciate his father's act.

In the close parlor, where old Ready-money had in one great gift beggared himself and made his son a millionaire, he could not think.

This rover of the seas went out into the air to realize his position; and then he did not do it in a moment. What a change a few up-and-down strokes of a pen can make! It seemed impossible. An hour before, Dick Mortiboy would have sworn that he had lived too long in a world of surprises to be surprised by any thing. But the sudden transformation of Lad-our's partner into the richest man in Market Basing was almost too much even for his adamant nerves. The sensation of being respectable was too new. He was a little staggered: strolled fast along the gravel paths of the old-fashioned garden—now pale, now slightly flushed; and, intense realist as he was, had a dim notion of something unreal in his great stroke of fortune. This feeling floated across his brain once or twice in the first few seconds only. He felt the stiff parchment crumple in the grasp of his sinewy fingers. This put dreams to flight: here was reality!

He held possession in his hand.

He stood in his father's chest, he hardly knew how many years before he had expected to put them on.

From the moment he had made up his mind to stay with his father, he had played his cards well; but the end of the game had come almost too soon. Life thus lost one fertile source of amusement for Dick Mortiboy. And then the old man had outwitted him, after all. Closely as he had watched him, he had never dreamed what was in the wind. He had seen the effort Mr. Meliship's death had had on his father, and had marked with interested eye the signs of his mental decay; but the idea of Ready-money Mortiboy making a transfer of every thing to him never entered his mind.

The man who would have grudged him a coin gave him his hoards; yet, in his heart, Dick had not one spark of gratitude towards his father.

"I've had a good many facers in my life," he said to himself, "but this is the most wonderful of any. Twelve years' knocking about ought to make a man equal to most accidents; but I don't suppose that any accident ever happened that could hold a candle to this. Fatherly affection must be a very strong sentiment with some people. I don't feel any such yearning after little Bill as the governor must have had for me.

Wonder if he repents his ways, and is trying to make atonement? Can't be that. No, he thinks he has saved the probate duty, and made a nominal transfer to his affectionate, his clever, steady, honest son, Richard. Wonder if he thinks I'm going to let him have his own way? Can't be such a fool as that. Wonder if he believes

all he says? Must. Most extraordinary old chap, the governor! What are we to do now? Shall we live in Market Basing, and 'see the property grow?' I don't think we can. Shall we undeceive the old man?"

His face grew dark.

"He treated me like a dog. He gave me the wages of a porter. He starved me and bullied me. He turned me into the streets with a ten-pound note. When I come home and pretend that I am rich, he fawns upon me and licks my hand. 'Honor your father.' Now, I ask an enlightened General Board of Worldly Affairs — if there is such a thing — how the devil I can be expected to honor Mr. Mortiboy, senior? Ready-money Mortiboy, is he? Good. He shall have ready money for the future, and not too much of it. What he gave me, I will give him. I have been a forger, have I? I've been a gambler and an adventurer — I've lived by tricks and cunning for twelve years, have I? I've been a by-word in towns where men are not particular as to their morals, have I? I've done the fighting for Lafleur, and the lying for both of us, have I? I've been Roaring Dick, with my life in my hand, and my pistol in my pocket, sometimes with a fistful of money, sometimes without a dollar, have I? And whose fault?"

He shook his fist at the house.

"And now I'm master of every thing. My affectionate father, your affection comes too late. I am what you made me — an unnatural son."

He was gesticulating a little in his anger, like Lafleur did when he was excited. He picked up the trick from his partner. And he was speaking out in a loud tone of voice, and shaking his fist at the bottom of the garden, near the old door he had found locked on the Sunday morning when he first met Polly after his return. And the door had a very large keyhole, and there was an eye at it watching him with considerable interest.

Polly was there.

"D-i-c-k," she whispered through the keyhole.

He heard it, swore, and thought the place was haunted. His back was turned to the door.

"Dick," she called again, in a louder tone.

This time he knew the voice, and soon discovered where it came from.

"Good gad — Polly!"

He did not look pleased.

He put his foot on the pump, and looked over. She was dirty, and her clothes were very untidy.

"Dick, what were you going on like that

for? I saw you when you were up at the other end of the garden, shaking your fist at your father's bed-room window. What's he been doing of, Dick?"

"What do you want here at this time of the day?" was the only answer she got to her queries.

She did not dare to repeat them. She was afraid of the man's anger.

"Dick," she said, "I want some money. Little Bill's been took bad, and I've nothing to send him. Scarlet fever he's got."

"Polly, my girl," — he was still on his own side of the wall — "you've had fifty pounds out of me in three months. Bill can't cost all that, you know. You'd better not try on any humbug, because I'm not going to stand it."

"Now, who was? And he's had every farden of it, except a pound or two I kept for clothes myself. But he wants it, Dick."

"Then I'll take it to him."

The woman's expression grew obstinate and stubborn.

"You take me to your father, and say, 'Here's my wife,' and you shall have his address: not before, my fine Dick."

"Then," said Dick, "you may go to the devil!" And marched away.

Polly waited a few minutes, to see if he would come back; and then she too walked off.

The evening was a silent and dismal one. Mr. Mortiboy proposed a bottle of port to drink the occasion. Dick suggested brandy instead; and the old man drank three tumblers of brandy and water. In his excited state, the drink produced no effect upon him; and he went off to bed at half-past nine without the usual symptoms of partial inebriation. Then Dick relapsed into a gloomy meditation by the kitchen fire. He was aroused by the clock striking ten, and leaped to his feet as if he had been shot.

"Good Lord!" he ejaculated, "the very time for Lafleur. I had forgotten him."

He kicked off his boots, and crept silently along the passage and up the stairs. A light came through the door of Mr. Mortiboy's bedroom, which was left ajar. He heard the sound of money.

"Cunning old fox," thought Dick; "hiding my money, is he?"

Then he crouched down in the dark passage, and waited.

The situation presently struck him as being intensely comic. Here was the old man counting his money in the bedroom, while Lafleur was probably getting up the ladder. Instead of sleeping off a dose of

morphia, Mr. Mortiboy was in a lively state of wakefulness. Instead of robbing the father, Lafleur would be robbing him. He chuckled at the thought, leaning against the wall, till the floor shook.

In five minutes or so, he saw a black form against the window.

"There he is," thought Dick.

The real fun was about to begin.

Lafleur opened the window noiselessly and stepped into the passage. He moved with silent steps, feeling his way till he came to the old man's door. Then he looked in, and stood still, irresolute; for the light was streaming out, and Mr. Mortiboy was not even in bed.

Dick crept along the passage, and laid a heavy hand upon his shoulder. Lafleur started, but he knew the pressure of that hand; it could only be Dick.

They peeped together through the half-opened door. Mr. Mortiboy had opened the doors of his great press, and brought out all the contents. They were scattered on the table. Gold and silver plate, forks, spoons, cups, épergnes — all lay piled in a heap. In the centre a great pile of sovereigns, bright and new-looking. The old man stood over them with outstretched arms, as if to confer his blessing. Then he laid his cheek fondly on the gold. Then he dabbled his hands in it, took it up, and dropped the coins through his fingers. Then he polished a gold cup with his sleeve, and murmured, —

"Dick knows nothing of this — Dick knows nothing of this."

And then Dick gently led Lafleur away, and brought him silently to the kitchen, where with both doors shut, he sat down, and laughed till his sides ached.

"Pardon me," said Lafleur, whose face was white with rage and disappointment, "I don't see the joke. Pray was this designed as a special amusement for me?"

"I must laugh," cried Dick. "It's the finest thing I ever came across."

And he laughed again till the tears ran down his cheeks.

Lafleur sat down doggedly and waited.

"And now," said Dick, at last, "let us talk. It's all right partner, and you can have your five thousand whenever you like."

"Now?" asked Lafleur.

"Well, not now. In a few days. Hang it, man! you can't get a big lump like that paid down at a moment's warning."

"Tell me all about it."

Dick told him in as few words as possible.

"It is all yours, Dick?"

"All mine."

"You are rich at last. Good." He was

considering how he might get his share of the plunder. "Let us have a few hundreds to-night, Dick. I lost a lot yesterday, and promised to pay to-morrow evening."

"How can I? To-morrow I can give you five hundred from the bank, if you like."

"Too late. If it is all yours, the money up stairs is yours. Let me have some of that."

Dick hesitated. Void of affection as he was to his father, he yet felt a touch of compunction at undecieving him so soon.

"I meant to have an explanation in a few days. But if you cannot wait" —

"I really cannot, my dearest Richard. It is life and death to me. I must start from this respectable place to-night with money in my pocket."

"Then we must have our row to-night. It seems hard that the old man should not have a single night's rest in his delusion. However, it can't be helped. Give me your duplicate keys."

He put on his boots, took a candle, and went up stairs to his father's room. Mr. Mortiboy was in bed by this time, and asleep; for the explanation of things had taken nearly an hour. Dick opened the press, took out a couple of bags, such as those used at the bank, containing a hundred pounds each, and threw them with a crash upon the table. The noise woke his father.

He started up with a shriek.

"Thieves! — murder! — Dick! — Dick! — thieves! — Dick!"

"It is Dick. Don't be alarmed, father. I am helping myself to a little of my own property. That is all."

The old man gasped, but could not speak. He thought it was another of the dreadful dreams which disturbed his night's rest.

Dick sat on the edge of his bed, with the candlestick in his hand, and looked him in the face, pulling his beard meditatively, as he always did when he was going to say a grave thing.

"It is quite as well, father, that we should understand one another. All your property is now mine. I can do what I like with it, consequently, what I like with you. I shall not be hard on you. What you gave me when I was nineteen, I will give you now that you are getting on towards seventy. An old man does not want so much as a boy, so the bargain is a good one for you. A pound a week shall be paid to you regularly, with your board and lodging, and as much drink as you like to put away. The pound begins to-morrow."

His father put his hand to his forehead,

and looked at him curiously. He still thought it was a nightmare.

"It is not your fault that your estimate of my character was not quite correct, is it? You see, you never gave yourself any trouble to find out what I was like as a young man. That is an excuse for you, and accounts for your being so easily taken in by my stories. I wanted your money, which was natural enough. I knew very well that if I came snivelling home like a beggar, a beggar I should remain. So I came home like a rich man; flourished the little money I had in your face; bragged about my estates and my mines, and all the rest of it. Estates and mines were all lies. I've got nothing. I never had any thing. I've lived by gambling and my wits. This very night, if it were not for the deed of gift you have made, I should have robbed you, and you would never have found out who did it."

The old man's face was ghastly. Beads of perspiration stood upon his forehead. His eyes stared fixedly at his son, but he made no sign.

"You see, my dodge succeeded. Dodges generally do, if one has the pluck and coolness to carry them through. Now I'm worth half a million of money. No more screwing hard-earned coins out of poor people. No more drudging and grinding for the firm of Mortiboy. The property, sir, shall be spent, used, made the most of — for my own enjoyment."

Still his father neither moved nor spoke.

"I've lived, since you kicked me out into the world, as I could — as a gambler lives. You have told me, in the last few days, how you have lived. Father, *my life has not been so bad as yours*. I've held my own among lawless men, and fought for my own hand, in my own defence. No one curses the name of Roaring Dick — not even the men whose money I have taken from their pockets; for they would only have done as much by me if they could. But you? In every street, in every house, yours will be a memory of hatred. I never robbed a poor man. You have spent your life in robbing poor men. There, I have had my say, and shall never say it again. As for these things," kicking the door of the press, "they will be all sold. To-night I only want the money. Go to sleep now, and thank Heaven that you have got a son who will take care of your latter days."

He took his bags and left the room. His father threw out his arms after him in a gesture of wild despair, and then fell heavily back, without a sigh or a groan.

Lafleur returned to London by the night train with the money; and Dick went quietly to bed, where he slept like a top.

In the morning, Mr. Mortiboy did ~~not~~ appear at breakfast. Dick sent Hester ~~up~~ open, the gold and silver plate lying ~~about~~ on the floor, as Dick had left it. But the late owner of all was lying motionless on the bed. He was stricken with paralysis. His power of speech and of moving ~~were~~ gone; and, save for his breathing, ~~you~~ would have called him dead. Dick, with great thoughtfulness, had him removed down stairs to his old study, where he installed Hester as nurse and attendant, telling her to get another woman for the house. He had all the doctors in the place to attend his father, and expressed, with dry eyes, much sorrow at the hopeless character of the malady. Market Basing was greatly exercised in spirit at the event, which it considered as a "judgment," though no especial reason was alleged for the visitation. And all men began to praise Dick's filial piety, and to congratulate Mr. Mortiboy, or rather his memory, on having a son — *tali ingenio præditum* — gifted with such a remarkable sweetness of disposition, and so singular an affection for his father.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE duties of a son being performed, and his father formally placed under the charge of old Hester, Dick put the keys of office in his pocket, and walked over to the bank, where the news of old Ready-money's paralysis had already been received. Ghymes and the lawyer were the only persons who knew of the deed of gift.

"Don't he look solemn?" asked the old women of each other, as the afflicted son went down the street.

"Such a son as he was too! Ah! better than old Ready-money deserved."

Ghymes, in the manager's office, was looking over papers.

"So," said Dick, shaking hands with him, and sitting on the table. "you didn't approve of the deed of gift, eh? Never mind; quite right, and just like you to say so. However, that's all over. You've heard of the old man's stroke, I suppose? Doctor thinks some shock must have accelerated the final break-up. Shock of yesterday, I suppose. He couldn't bear to see the money go."

This was strictly and literally true. Mr. Mortiboy, though from his bed and not from his parlor, could not bear to see the money going.

"However, it's all over now, and things are changed. As for us two, Ghymes, you

have served my father so well that I hope you will go on serving me."

"I desire nothing better."

"Things will be different, I dare say, because I am going to manage matters after another fashion; but we shall pull together; never fear that. I pull with everybody."

"I've been in the bank, man and boy, for sixteen years. I should be sorry to leave it now," said Ghrimes, half to himself.

"Of course you will not leave it. You will go on managing. I'm not going to sit with my hands in my pockets, but I am not a meddler."

"And your estates in Mexico? How shall you manage about them?" asked Ghrimes, in perfect good faith.

"My partner has gone out," replied Dick, with unmoved face, "to superintend them. I shall not trouble about them."

"Indeed, you need not," said his manager, "for there is work enough here for three men. Here, for instance, is a case — one of those cases which your poor father would always decide for himself."

"Well, then, for once I will decide for myself. What is it?"

And here Dick began that course of social reform which has made him immortal in Market Basing.

"It's the case of Tweedy, the builder. What are we to do with him? Your father always declared that he would advance him no more money. His bill is due to-day. He can't meet it, I know."

"Tell me all about him in a few words."

"Furniture dealer — cabinet-maker. Took to building. As fast as he built, got into difficulties. Mr. Mortiboy advanced him money; got his houses. Always in difficulties; will smash if we don't prevent it; pays his workmen by discounting small bills at the bank; is getting deeper every day."

"What have we got out of him?"

"About a dozen houses. That villa on the other side of the river in Derngate, among others. All profit, of course."

"That beats California. Send for him, and let us see him."

The man came; a man with a craze for designing and building; born to be an architect, but without an education; might have designed a cathedral, but expended his energies on Gothic villas, which he persuaded himself would make his fortune. Old Mortiboy had been getting money out of him for years.

"So you're Tweedy, are you?" said Dick, looking down at the nervous little man, from six feet one to five feet three.

"I remember you when you had your shop. Where is it now?"

"I wish I had it now, sir," said the man.

"You *would* try to make your fortune, you know. And you were conceited enough to think you could. And what are you worth now?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Nothing; and a bill of two hundred pounds to meet! Now, Tweedy, suppose you go back to the furniture shop. Don't look scared, man. I'll give you a lift. That little villa that you put up behind Derngate — a good house, is it? Very well; I'm going to live in it. Go up to town, and furnish it for me. Furnish it well — well, mind. Pay trade price, and charge yourself a fair profit. Get me good things; no gimcracks. Have every thing ready in three days. The bill may stand over. If you don't like this, say so."

The man began a flood of gratitude, which Dick stopped by pushing him out of the door.

"He deserves something for building me a dozen houses for nothing," he said coolly; "and I must get the place furnished. I made up my mind to live there this morning."

"One of your clerks, I am sorry to say, has embezzled some money. I found it out last night though he does not know it yet."

"How much is it?"

"Five pounds."

Dick winced. It was the exact amount of his own forgery.

"What is his name, and what is his salary?"

"Sullivan; he draws sixty pounds a year."

Dick put his head out of the door, and shouted to the office generally, —

"Send Sullivan here."

A pale-faced lad of twenty-two, with a weak and nervous mouth, and a hesitating manner, came in and shut the door, trembling.

"Well, Mr. Sullivan, and how about this five pounds?"

Mr. Sullivan burst into tears.

"The last clerk who embezzled money in this bank," said Mr. Ghrimes solemnly, "was tried for the offence, and underwent a sentence of imprisonment for it."

"There, you see," said Dick.

Mr. Sullivan sobbed louder.

"You draw sixty pounds a year, a princely salary," continued his new master. "Do you drink, or play billiards, or what, to get rid of so much money?"

"Nothing, sir."

"My young friend, you had better make a clean breast of it to Mr. Ghrimes and me, or it will certainly be a case of the man in blue and chokee. Now, think for a few minutes, and then answer."

The boy — he seemed little more — sat down, and laid his head in his hands.

"I cannot tell," he moaned. "I cannot tell you both."

Dick's face grew soft. The man who had not hesitated to tell his father the bitter truth, who had planned to rob him, who was devoid of scruples or of restraint or of fear, had yet a heart that could be touched. He could not bear the sight of misery.

"Leave us for two minutes, Ghymes. Now, my boy, what did you do it for?"

"I had to find five pounds for her; and I borrowed the money."

"Who is *her*? And why did she want five pounds?"

Then the story came out; how he wanted to marry a girl, the daughter of a small tradesman; how he was forbidden to speak to her; how they took secret walks together; how the old, old tale was repeated; how it became necessary for her to leave home, and he had taken the money to help her to go. And then more sobs, and more softening of Dick's heart.

"Go away now," said Dick, "and go on with your work. I am not going to prosecute you. Bring her with you this evening, at nine o'clock, to Dergate."

The delinquent despatched, Dick proceeded to ask for the salaries book. The cheapness with which banking is conducted, as evidenced by the salaries of the clerks, struck him as very remarkable. Mr. Ghymes, who managed a business worth many thousands a year, received the magnificent stipend of £200. The other employees from £120 to £50.

"Banking," said Dick, "seems about the easiest and cheapest way of getting money ever hit upon."

"When you've got your connection, it is," said his manager.

"Would you mind calling in the clerks? Gentlemen, I have no doubt," he said, addressing them in a body, in his best book English, "that my father's intention was to do just exactly what I am about to do. It must often have occurred to him, that to insure zeal, punctuality, and diligence, as well as honesty" — here Sullivan trembled exceedingly — "it is necessary to pay those gentlemen whose services you secure as highly as is compatible with your own interests." Here the clerks nudged each other. "I am now acting as his representative. You used to call him 'Ready-money' Mortiboy. He will still more deserve the title when I inform you that all your salaries are raised twenty-five per cent. from this moment." They all stared at one another. "But if you get into money difficulties, and don't tell me, you'll find your-

selves in the wrong box. Now don't make a row, but go back to your work;" for the clerks were preparing to make a demonstration of gratitude.

"And Sullivan," said Mr. Ghymes, "don't let us have any more of that unpunctuality which I reproved you for just now;" for the clerk's eyes were still wet with tears, and his fellows had been questioning him.

"Kindly said, Ghymes," said Dick. "Now for yourself."

That night Mr. Ghymes went to bed with his salary trebled, and a check for a thousand pounds.

The clerk Sullivan appeared as the clock struck nine at the house in Dergate, accompanied by a young woman. The pair looked very young and very forlorn. Dick opened the door himself, and led them to his own room — that which had been the parlor, where a few alterations had been hastily made to suit his own tastes, previous to his removal.

He made them sit down, and stood with his back to the fire looking at one and the other.

"You are a pretty pair of fools," he said.

The girl began to cry. Her lover had spirit enough to answer for her.

"She is not to blame. I am the only one."

"Do you want to marry him?" asked Dick bluntly of the girl.

She only cried the more.

"Well, then, do *you* want to marry her?"

"I do; of course I do."

"Which would you rather do, my dear; run away with him and be married in London, or be married here and go up to London afterwards on my business?"

"Oh, here — here, Mr. Mortiboy! But they won't let us."

"They will when I have seen your father. And I will see him to-night. Now have a glass of wine. What is your name, child?"

"Alice."

"Then, Alice, here's a glass of port for you. Sullivan, if you ill-treat your wife, look out for yourself. You will hear from me to-morrow morning. Good-by, Alice, my dear. Give me a kiss."

He went to the young lady's parent, and had an interview with him; the result of his arguments being that a wedding took place the following week.

Dick improved the occasion with his manager, pointing out to him the folly of putting young fellows in positions of trust without a salary sufficient to keep them from temptation; and he talked with so much wisdom that Ghymes began to re-

gard him as the foremost of living philosophers. Certain reflections, in the course of his life, Dick had certainly made; and he now began to act upon them.

In two or three days the furniture arrived, and the house beyond the river was rendered habitable, under the superintendence of Mrs. Heathcote. It was a small place, but big enough for a bachelor. And then, as Mrs. Heathcote observed, it was always easy to move, and of course he was not going to remain a bachelor always. Dick permitted the observation, in the presence of Polly — who had been brought by Mrs. Heathcote to help arrange and set to rights — to pass unanswered.

At first he announced his intention of having no servants in the house at all; but gave way at the remonstrances of Mrs. Heathcote, who felt here the family respectability was in danger.

"I will send you a nice old woman that I know, Dick," she said, "one that I can recommend."

The nice old woman — who was not nice to look at — came. She had a very bad time indeed, so long as she remained. Dick had given special orders that she was not on any account to cross the threshold of his smoking-room, an apartment which he intended to keep sacred. He did not lock the door; and on the very first day the old woman, urged on by the fury of feminine curiosity, opened the door. The astute Richard had affixed a cord craftily, one end being attached to the top of the sideboard, and the other to the door. All the glasses and decanters on his sideboard were pulled off and broken. There went three months' wages.

Dick disliked locking things up. The old woman loved strong drinks. On the second day, she drank out of a brandy bottle in which her master had mixed a certain medicine. That night she was very ill.

On the third day she was in his bedroom, where Dick had slung a hammock, as being more comfortable than a regular bed. An open letter lay on the table. She put on her spectacles and began to read it, holding it out, as old people do, between her hands. Dick, who was coming up the stairs — the big man moved noiselessly when he pleased — drew his pistol and fired — at her, she declared. The bullet passed straight through the letter, within an inch of her two thumbs. She dropped the paper, and fell backwards with a terrific shriek. Spectacles broken this time, too.

After that she resigned, and spread awful reports about the house.

Then Dick was left servantless, and for a day or two used to cook his steaks for dinner himself.

Mrs. Heathcote again came to his assistance.

"I don't know what you've done, Dick, but no woman in the place will come here. If you fire pistols at people, and poison your brandy, and tie ropes round your glasses, how can you expect it?"

"I didn't fire at her. I only frightened her."

"Well, would you like Mary? She wants to leave me — I don't know why. Says see must live nearer her mother. Perhaps she'd come. She's not so old as you might wish; but she's a well-conducted, handy woman, and I really think would make you comfortable."

He hesitated. The plan offered a good many advantages, not the least being that he would not have Polly coming secretly to see him, which was dangerous.

Dick had made a step in civilization. He began to respect people's opinions.

On the other hand, it would be disagreeable to have the woman always in the house. He chose at last to have a sort of day servant, one who should come with as many attendant ancillæ as might be judged necessary, at eight in the morning, and depart at seven in the evening. He would have no one sleep in the house. And to this decision, irregular and un-English as it appeared to Mrs. Heathcote, he adhered. Polly, however, left the service of Mrs. Heathcote, and came to Market Basing to live with her mother.

Of course, Market Basing could think of nothing but this fearful and wonderful mar. What he had done last — what he was likely to do — whom he would visit — were the chief subjects of their conversation at this period. They used to go to Derngate, and walk along the towing-path in hopes of seeing him in the Californian dress which he affected in warm weather. He was to be seen smoking a cigar after breakfast or dinner, in long boots, leather breeches, with a crimson silk cummerbund, and embroidered shirt, a richly braided jacket, and a Panama hat.

If he met any of the girls, he would converse with them without the ceremony of introduction: notably in the case of Lawyer Battiscombe's daughters, who, Mrs. Heathcote said, threw themselves at his feet. If he fell in with a man who pleased him, he would take him into the villa, and there compound him some strange drink which would make the world for a brief space appear a very paradise, until presently the magic of the dose departed, and the drinker would be left with hot coppers.

He never went to church, and refused to

subscribe to the chapel. To the rector he was polite, offering him, when he called, a glass of a certain curious restorative; and when the worthy clergyman turned the conversation on things ecclesiastical, Dick listened with the reverence of a catechumen.

"What I like in the church," said Dick, "is the complete equality that reigns in the building. All alike, eh? No difference between rich and poor in the matter of cushions and pews."

The rector felt that he was on delicate ground.

"And as to preaching, now. I suppose you find the people getting a great deal better every year?"

"Well—well—we do our best."

"They used to get drunk on Saturday nights. Do they still?"

The rector was obliged to own they did.

"Now, rector, let us have a bargain. You shall preach on any thing you like for a whole year; and if, after that time, you find the town better, and the—the special sin removed, come down on me for your schools, or any thing you like."

The rector hesitated.

"The grocer puts sand in his sugar and mixes his tea; and the publican puts 'foots' in his beer; the doctor humbugs us with his pills; the tobacconist waters the bird's-eye; the laborer drinks half his wages; the women are uncleanly and bad-tempered. Come, rector, there's a splendid field for you."

The rector was silent.

"I don't like unpractical things," continued Dick. "There was a township in California, sir, where they thought they ought to have a church. So they built one, and subscribed their dollars and got a brand new preacher in black togs from New York. Down he came; and the first Sunday they thought, out of common politeness, they'd give him a turn. He had a regular benefit; house full, not even standing room. Next Sunday nobody went: stalls, boxes, and pit all empty. So the minister went to the principal bar to ask the reason why. The chief man there—judge he was afterwards—took him up sharp enough."

"You've got a new church, haven't you?"

"Yes."

"And a handsome salary?"

"Yes."

"And didn't we all come to give you a start?"

"Yes."

"Then what on airth do you want more?"

"That's it, you see, rector. You get your innings every Sunday, and the people

go to hear you just out of politeness and habit, and go away again. And if there's any thing on airth you want more, you'd better try and work it another way."

CHAPTER XX.

THE very top attic of a very high house, in a street near the Mansion House. The sun shining brightly in at the window, and baking the slates overhead. The windows shut close, nevertheless. A queer room: the roof ill-shapen, and the windows odd. The only furniture a bench or table of rough deal, running across the place just under the windows. The floor stained of a thousand hues; every inch of its surface is saturated with paints and varnishes upset over it. The walls plastered with the scrapings of thousands of palettes, dried on in parti-colored patches, and decorated with half a dozen soiled and smoke-begrimed cardboard scrolls, on which are written, like so many texts—"the eleventh commandment: Mind your own business," "From witchcraft, priestcraft, and kingcraft, good Lord, deliver us," and such-like legends, the work of a former prisoner there. On the floor is a great stack of pictures, which have been taken out of their frames in order to undergo the process of cleaning; gallon cans of copal and mastic varnish stand by them, in readiness for the varnishing. At the bench stands a young man in his shirt sleeves, rubbing away as hard as he can at the resinous surface of an oil painting, rapidly getting the old varnish off with his finger ends, and working down to the artist's colors again. He works with a will, singing at his work in the finest tenor voice you ever heard outside the walls of the Covent Garden Opera House.

It is Frank Melliship. How he came here I will briefly explain.

When ruin comes upon a young gentleman of expensive tastes, who has received the very best, and consequently the least useful, education that his country has to boast of, it generally finds him in a very helpless and very defenceless condition. This was, as we have seen, Frank Melliship's lot. He had no longer any money to spend, and he had not been taught how to get any. Poverty would not have frightened him much, because he was young, and did not know what it meant: what grinding years of self-sacrifice and denial, what bitterness of struggle, and what humiliations. But there were his mother and sister. To knock about for a year or two—no young man thinks he is going to be poor

after five and twenty or so — would have had the charm of novelty. But for these two — the delicately reared gentlewomen — the change from the house at Market Basing to the miserable lodgings in Fitzroy Street, off the Fulham Road, was indeed a plunge. And though Kate did her best bravely to meet the inevitable, their mother, a weak and watery creature, never attempted to conceal the misery of her new position, and to lament the glories, which she naturally exaggerated, of the past.

"What have we done," she would say at each fresh reminder of the social fall — "what did we do to merit all this?"

Frank and Kate, with the sanguine enthusiasm which belonged to their father's blood as well as to their time of life, tried to cheer her with pictures of the grand successes which were to come; but in vain. The good lady would only relapse into another of her weeping fits, and be taken to her room, crying, "O Francis! — oh! my poor husband!" till the enthusiasm was damped, and the present brought back to the brother and sister in all its nakedness.

Every day they took counsel together. Frank's bedroom, metamorphosed by Kate's clever hands, till it looked no more like a bedroom than Mr. Swiveller's one apartment, served as their studio. An inverted case — which once, in what lodging-house keepers call their "happier days," had contained Clicquot or gooseberry — served as a platform, on which Frank stood for a model to his sister. They called it their throne.

"Do — my dear good boy — do hold out your arm as I placed it," says Mistress Kate, sketching in rapidly, while Frank stands as motionless as he can before her in the best suit he has left. "I have wasted I don't know how much time to-day in getting up to put you right."

"My dear girl, can I stand — I put it to you — can I stand like a semaphore for an hour at a time? Even a semaphore's arms go up and down, you know."

"Yes, I know, Frank, it's dreadfully tiresome, as I found when I sat for your Antigone. But see how patient I was!"

The advantage was certainly on Frank's side; because Kate would stand in the same position for half an hour at a time — twice as long as a professional model.

"How far have you got, Kate?"

"Don't move now — a moment more — only five minutes, and I shall have finished the outline."

She is sketching on a boxwood block. It was the first order they had received; it was to illustrate a poem in a magazine, and the price was three guineas.

"If you go on at this rate," said Frank, "it will pay a great deal better than oils."

Why, you can do a block a day — easily — working up your back-grounds by candle-light."

"Yes — if we can get the orders; but you must not forget the trouble we had in getting the first."

"C'est le commencement," said Frank.

"Et gai, gai," — he began to sing.

"Do not move just now. Please don't."

"Bergeronnette,
Douce baiselette,
Donnez-le moi, votre chapelet,"

sang her model, with one of his happy laughs. "Don't you remember, Katie, when I sang that jolly old French song last at Parkside, when Grace played the accompaniment? Dearest Grace! When shall I see her again?"

"Let us talk seriously," said Kate. "I am sure mamma must go away into the country somewhere. We could live cheaper than we can in London, and I know she would get back her health at some quiet seaside place; and I could fill my sketch-book with pretty bits, and work them up into landscapes, like those you sold —"

"For fifteen shillings each," Frank laughed.

His experience of picture selling had been rather disheartening. But still he hoped; nor was it unnatural that he should do so. He had a strong taste for art. He could do what few young men can do — draw nicely. He had been famous for his pen-and-ink sketches at Cambridge; but Kate was much more proficient with her pencil than he was.

Kate guided their course. She chose the lodgings near the Museum. She was purser for the family, and did the marketing, often at night, in the Fulham Road; for her mother would speedily have outrun the constable by a distance.

As it was, John Heathcote's gift was reduced to small dimensions.

Grace's hundred pounds Frank held sacred, proposing to use it for his mother.

Kate took the necessary steps to their painting at the public galleries. They went at first on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays to the Museum. Then Frank went on Thursdays and Fridays to the National Gallery, leaving Kate to go to the South Kensington Museum by herself. They wanted to learn Art. Now, Art is learned, they had been told, by copying. So they set to work to copy. Kate spent three days a week for four months at Dyckmans' "Blind Beggar." It is a pretty picture, but copying it teaches nothing. She found that out before it was half done; but she made a splendid copy of it on panel, like the original. Frank copied Sir Josh-

was "Heads of Angels," at the National. In this work there was something to be learnt. The softness, the delicacy, the angelic expression of those little cherubs' heads, all painted from one tiny mortal face, showed the student of art what it is in the hands of a master. And Reynolds is a master for a very unartistic nation to be proud of. Frank had finished this picture when Kate's "Blind Beggar" was half done. The copy he made was very good. At the gallery the old women praised it; and as they had often copied it themselves, they were judges. A dealer who came in one student's day called it "clever." He was a burly man, with a tremendously red nose that told its own tale of knock-outs. This professional opinion encouraged Frank. He had hoped to sell it to some of those connoisseurs of art who loiter round the students' easels on closed days; but there had been no bid.

He had it framed; it happened to be at the shop of the red-nosed man, whose name was Burls. He paid two pounds ten shillings for an appropriate Reynolds frame for it.

Then he put his picture into a cab, and tried the dealers all over the West End with it.

"What! buy a copy of a picture in the National Gallery? Not unless we knew where we could place it!"

It was a knock-down blow for our innocent young artist; but it was the answer he got everywhere, from rough dealers and smooth, Hebrew and Gentile. So, at last, in despair, he left it at an auction-room in Bond Street, where a fortnight afterwards, Kate and he attended, and bought it in at two pounds seven and sixpence — half a crown less than the frame that was on it had cost him: and he had five per cent. commission to pay, and the cost of taking it home. This opened his eyes to the trade value of copies of pictures that are known.

A young lady at the Museum made friends with Kate — they all make friends with one another — and exhorted her to try at working on wood. So with Frank and her mother for models, and a background out of her sketch book, she made a pretty picture, and despatched Frank to lay siege to the editors.

He took a few water-color sketches of his own with him, to show at one or two picture-shops where he had seen similar sketches displayed in the windows.

He tried two shops — one was near Piccadilly — in his walk towards the publishers' shops. He was not afraid of talking to the shopkeepers; but he did feel a little nervous at the prospect of bearding an editor in his den.

So he showed his sketches, with some success. The answer at both the shops was, —

"Do me some with shorter petticoats, and I'll give you forty-two shillings a dozen for them."

The shops were kept by brothers, and Frank's sketches were pretty young ladies. He profited by this experience.

He spent that afternoon, and the next, and the next after that, in calling at different places with the inquiry, "Is the editor of the *So-and-so* in?"

With one result. The editor never was in — to a young man who did not know his name. At night, after the third of these excursions, he felt embittered towards these gentlemen, and told Kate, he thought they might as well put their block in the fire; it would warm them so.

The weather was as warm as Frank's temper. Kate reproved him, and gave him her royal commands to try again.

"And now, Frank," she said after their mother had gone to bed, "I have made up my mind to go away from London, and take mamma with me — to Wales, I think. Living is cheap there, and the scenery is beautiful. She *must* be taken out of London."

Frank felt rather glad at this. He thought his mother and sister would be better in the country for a few months. When they came back to him, he meant to have a home for them.

"And I'll tell you why, Frank. I shall finish my picture; but it is not easy to do that. There are three people at it now, — such a vulgar man; and oh! two such vulgar women, — and they race on a Wednesday morning to get up the stairs before me, and secure their seats for the week close to the picture. The man elbows roughly by me, and I can hardly get a look at the picture myself."

Frank began to fume — his fingers tingled.

"The authorities should make some proper rules, I think, for I began my copy before any of them. Of course, I can't race up the stairs with them, and tear through the rooms to be first at the picture; and, then, Frank — you'll promise me to do as I tell you?"

"I don't know, Kate. I think I shall be at the top of the stairs before that fellow some day soon" —

"There now, I have done if you do not give me your word."

"Well — there, then — go on."

"Well, Frank, an old man — nobleman, they say he is — has been very attentive."

Her brother gave an angry snort, and his eyes looked very mischievous.

"Don't be angry — he is too ridiculous — the funniest old object, with false teeth, and a wig, and stays, and a gold-headed cane. He wants to buy the 'Blind Beggar,' and has given me advice I don't want about painting it; and to-day, Frank" —

"To-day, Kate?"

"He brought me a bouquet, which of course I declined to accept. But I thought it best to put away my picture, and leave the gallery."

"I shall be there to-morrow."

He was, nearly every day after till Kate had finished her picture.

But the Earl of — only paid one more visit to the Museum during his stay in town that season.

In the afternoon of the day on which Frank had given his card to his sister's admirer, he determined to try his luck again with the block and portfolio of sketches. At the first place he called at, the man he saw took his name up to the editor of the magazine, and to his great surprise, he was asked to walk up stairs.

He found himself in a dingy room, in the presence of a fatherly young man, with a grave but kind face.

Frank told him how surprised he was at having the opportunity of showing his specimens and asking for work.

The editor of the "Universal Magazine" was a scholar and a gentleman. He drew the young man out, looked at his sketches, and gave him a few words of judicious praise.

"But I don't use any blocks. The 'Universal' is not an illustrated magazine."

Frank was disappointed.

"I really had not thought of that," he stammered out.

"But I am always ready to help any body I can. Wait a minute, Mr. Melliship. Your sister's drawings are really clever, and the sort of thing that is wanted. I will give you a note to a friend of mine who uses a great many illustrations." He handed Frank the letter, adding, "I shall be glad to hear of your success some day when you are passing this way. Stay, I will give you something else."

He wrote rapidly for five or six minutes, and then handed Frank a list of all the illustrated magazines of standing and respectability, with the names of their editors.

"I have put a star to those where you may just mention my name."

Frank thanked his new friend very sincerely, and bowed himself out — to get an order for a block fifteen minutes after.

The editor of the "Universal" blew down a pipe at his desk. Whistle.

"Sir?"

"Look in the contributor's book, vol.

xxvii. Who wrote the article on 'Commercial Morality?'"

After an interval of ten minutes, a whistle in the editor's room.

"Well?"

"Mr. Francis Melliship, banker, Market Basing, Holmschire."

"Ah, I thought I knew the name. If I am not mistaken, I shall be able to pay this young man what his father refused to receive, the honorarium for several articles he did for us."

He entered Frank's name in his notebook.

But Frank was not the sort of gentleman to be helped. He would not ask anybody for assistance. Dick Mortiboy would have helped him; John Heathcote would have helped him; and in London, a dozen men who had known his father would have taken him by the hand. But Frank was too proud. He would make his own way — to Grace. It was always Grace, this goal he was hastening to. He devoured her letters to Kate. He inspired Kate's epistles in reply.

"Burn the boy's nonsense," honest John Heathcote had said a dozen times. "If we could only get at him, we might do something for him. Painter! I would as soon see a boy of mine a fiddler."

But Mrs. Heathcote was rather pleased than not.

"What in the world can he do without any money?" she said. "If his father had brought him up to something, he would have stood the same chance as other people."

As the summer advanced, Mrs. Melliship's health became worse, and it was decided that Kate and she should go away into Wales. Kate had sold her "Blind Beggar" for twenty pounds, and with this money they paid their few debts, and Frank saw them off.

The world was before him. He took a lodging in Islington, and went on with his painting. He still meant to be famous. One fine morning he had no money left except a five-pound note he had resolved never to break into. This brought him down from the clouds. He had not been successful in getting any work for the magazines, so he determined, at whatever sacrifice, to turn his "Angels' Heads" into money.

He took it first to Mr. Burl's shop, and told the picture-dealer he had tried hard to sell it before, but had been unable to dispose of it.

"It isn't in our way, sir."

"Is it in anybody's way?" asked Frank.

"I should think not. Copies aren't no good at all."

"Would you give me any thing for it?" asked the young man.

"Well, you may leave it if you like. I've got a customer I don't mind showing it to."

Frank called again a few days after.

"I'll give you six pounds for it, and then I dare say I shall lose by it," said Burls.

He had sold it for eighteen guineas to a customer who collected Sir Joshua's, and bought copies when the originals were not likely to come into the market. But Frank did not know this. He accepted the six pounds eagerly.

"I'm a ready-money man, my lad—there's your coin."

"Thank you," said Frank, pocketing the six sovereigns. "You have a great many pictures, Mr. Burls."

And he might have added, "very great rubbish they are."

"There's seventeen hundred pictures in this house, from cellar to garrets, lad," said the dealer.

They stood in stacks, eight or ten thick, round the cellar, down the open trap of which Frank could see. They were piled everywhere. One canvas, thirty feet by ten, was screwed up to the ceiling. They were numberless pictures of every age and school. Titians and Tenierses, Snyderes, and Watteaus: all the kings of England, from the Conqueror down to William IV.; ancestors ready for hanging in the pseudo-baronial hall of the *nouveaux riches*; in a word, furniture pictures by the gross.

"If there was seventeen hundred before, yours makes the seventeen hundred and oneth, don't it?"

The dealer was pleased to joke. His shopman laughed, and Frank did too. He had put his pride in his pocket, for Mr. Burls amused him.

"Now, this here Sir Joshua ought to be wet; and not to ask you to stand, suppose we torse."

Frank assented, lost, and paid for three glasses.

"Where's Critchett? I haven't seen him to-day?" Mr. Burls asked of his man.

"He has not turned up. The old complaint, I expect."

"Well, you can tell him from me, when he does turn up, he's got to the end of his tether," said Mr. Burls, very angrily. "Be dashed, if I employ such a vagabond any longer. There's this picture of Mr. Thingamy's for him to restore; and I promised it this week faithfully."

"He's often served you so before," said the man.

But this remark did not soothe the dealer. It made him only the more angry.

Now, Mr. Frank Melliship had got to the end of his tether, too; for he had only the six pounds he had just received, and no immediate prospect of being able to earn more.

Opportunity comes once in a way to every man. It had come to Frank, and he determined to make the most of it.

"Could I restore the picture for you?"

It was a great ugly daub—a copy, a hundred years old probably, of some picture in a Dutch gallery and stood on the floor by Frank. Doubtless it had a value in the eyes of its owner, who thought it worthy of restoration: but a viler, blacker tatterdemalion of a canvas you never saw.

At Frank's question, Mr. Burls opened his eyes very wide.

"Show us your hands," he said. "That's what they say to beggars as say they're innocent at the station. Ah! I thought so; you ain't done any hard work. Now perhaps you're what I call a gingerbread gentleman. Are you?"

The color mounted to Frank's cheeks.

"I want employment. I am a poor man."

"He aint no use to us, is he, Jack?"

Jack, Mr. Burls's man shook his head.

"I could repaint that picture where it wants it," said Frank.

"Did you ever restore a picture before? Restoring's an art: it's a thing as isn't learnt in a moment, I can tell you. 'Pictures cleaned, lined, and restored by a method of our own invention, without injury, and at a moderate charge,' said Mr. Burls, quoting an inscription in gilt letters over Frank's head. "Now, did you ever clean a picture?"

"No," said Frank.

"Do you think you could do the painting part if I taught you how to clean and restore on the system I invented myself?"

"I think I could," said Frank.

"But if I teach you the secrets of the trade, what are you going to give me?"

"I'm afraid I can't afford to give you any thing," said Frank "except labor."

"It's worth fifty pounds to anybody to know. Critchett might have made a fortune at it. Look at me. I began as an errand boy. I'm not ashamed of it. A good restorer can always keep himself employed."

"Indeed," said Frank—who contemplated with admiration a man who had been the founder of his own fortune—"I should very much like to learn the art of restoring; as I have not been successful in getting a living as an artist."

"Well," said the dealer, "I'll see first what you're up to, and whether you can

paint well enough for me if I was to teach you the restoring. You may come up stairs. Bring that picture up on your shoulders."

Frank hoisted the canvas aloft, and followed Mr. Burls up the stairs.

CHAPTER XXI.

It was not very easy for Frank to get the picture round the turns of the narrow staircase, which led from Mr. Burls's shop to the room above, which he called the gallery. In this room, Frank saw that there were a number of pictures hanging round the walls, and on several tall screens. They were of a better class than those in the shop. Mr. Burls led the way through the gallery to a narrow flight of stairs at the end. Mounting these, with the canvas on his shoulder, Frank found more rooms full of pictures, framed and unframed, in stacks that reached up to his chin.

On the floor above, a number of men were employed in gilding and repairing frames. Up one more flight of stairs, and they were on the attic floor, apparently the sanctum of Mr. Critchett, the restorer; for in a little back room were his easels and palettes, and his battered tubes of paint, and several short and very black clay pipes.

"I find the materials," said Mr. Burls. "I've paid for all the paints and brushes, so I suppose they're mine."

"Certainly," said Frank.

"Now you can set to work on that Teniers as you've carried up stairs; and then I shall see what you're up to, and whether you'll suit me. If you ain't got all the paint you want, come to me."

With this remark, Mr. Burls left Frank, and, pulling off his coat, set to work himself in the front room, a short description of which I gave at the beginning of my last chapter.

Left to himself, Frank looked about him. There was a good light, to the north; but when he stood upright anywhere in the room, his head nearly touched the ceiling.

The prospect from his window was limited almost entirely to tiles and chimney pots.

Pasted to the walls were a number of prints of the most celebrated characters of English history, which — as Frank rightly guessed — were used in the productions of the genuine antique portraits which were founded upon them. Mr. Critchett had left a Queen Elizabeth, in a great starched ruff and jewelled stomacher, in an unfinished state on his easel.

The furniture of his atelier was by no means luxurious. It consisted of a cane-seated chair, with three orthodox legs, and an old mahl-stick for a fourth. A high rush hassock, tied on this chair, led Frank to suppose that his predecessor had been a short man. There were, besides, three easels, a fireplace with a black kettle on the hob, and several canvases — some new, some old — in the corners; and this was all.

Having made this short tour of inspection, Frank settled down to his work.

He found it easy: little patches of paint gone here and there all over the portrait; and he supplied these, carrying out, as well as he could interpret it, the design of the original painter.

Mr. Burls was constantly walking in and out of the room, and looking over his shoulder, and volunteering unnecessary pieces of advice.

At four o'clock he left off "chafing" his pictures; and looked in at Frank, sneering his coarse hands with spirits, to get off the dirt with which they were ditched.

"There," said he, "I've done for to-day. I've chafed fifteen pictures: that's fifteen pound earned. I shall charge them a quid apiece for doing 'em. I don't work for nothing, and I don't know anybody in the picture trade that does."

At six, he came up to Frank again, and looked at his work.

"That'll do, my lad — that'll do," and went away again.

This cheered Frank, and he worked as long as it was light, and walked home to his lodgings at Islington a happy man.

Next day he finished the job, and Mr. Burls passed judgment on his work. It was favorable to him; and he was duly installed in the place of Critchett, kicked out.

Frank wrote and told his sister and mother, staying at Llan-y-Fyddloes, that he had got regular employment that suited him very well, and that his prospects were brightening.

He did this to cheer them, and to some extent he believed what he said.

"If," he wrote to Kate, "I can only earn enough to keep myself, and send something every week to you, by the work I am at, and still leave myself time for study and improvement, I am satisfied. Depend upon it, you shall see me in the catalogue at the Academy before long, No. 00001, 'Interior of a studio,' by" — drawing a very fair likeness of himself by way of signature to his letter.

He said nothing to Kate about the amount of money he could earn at his new work, nor did he tell her what it was exact-

ly. His reason for the first was that he wrote his letter, before he had settled terms with Mr. Burls; for the second, because he knew his mother would become hysterical at the bare idea of her son working for a living in any but the most gentlemanlike manner, such as society permits. Now, for his part, Frank saw nothing degrading in any honest labor, and was quite content to put up for a while with such humble occupation.

"Hang it," he thought, "I'd rather do it than sponge on somebody else."

But Kate guessed it was something rather beneath his dignity to do, he was so reserved.

His arrangement with the picture dealer, was in these terms:—

Burls: "I'm fair and straight, I am. I should not have got on if I'd done as many chaps do."

Frank: "To be sure. I think I am tolerably straightforward, too, Mr. Burls. I hope so, at least."

Burls: "I don't know nothing about you, do I?"

Frank (reddening): "No."

Burls: "Well, I don't want to ask no questions, my lad."

The man's familiarity was disgusting. It was a fine lesson in self-command for Frank to make himself stomach it.

"You want work, and I'll give you some. You can work for me instead of old Critchett. I'm fair and straight with you. Some chaps would want you to work six months for nothing."

Frank: "I could not do that."

Burls, continuing: "I don't ask you. You shall have what Critchett had—that's a shillin' an hour; and handsome pay, too. I call it. I like to pay my chaps well. Regular work, too. You may work eight hours a day if you like, and then you'll take eight and forty shillin' a week, you know."

Mr. Burls appealed to his shopman to support his statement that Frank's predecessor often "took eight and forty a week."

The terms seemed fair; though the remuneration for restoring, which required artistic skill, seemed to Frank to bear no just proportion to the money to be got by cleaning—for Mr. Burls earned fifteen pounds before dinner at that, Frank recollected.

However, he could hardly expect to get more than Critchett had received before him; so he agreed to take a shilling an hour, and work regularly for Mr. Burls.

Burls: "Done, then, and settled. We don't want any character, do we, Jack? Pictures aint easy things to carry out of the shop, are they?"

Frank (very angry): "Sir!"

Burls: "No offence. Don't get angry. It was only a hint that we should not trouble you for references to your last employment. Rec'lect what I said about those hands. You've been brought up a gentleman, I dare say, but you're right not to starve your belly to feed your pride. Don't be angry with me. I'm straight and fair, I am. You'll find me that."

I have now explained how Frank came to be in the top attic of Mr. Burls's house of business. He remained in his situation about three months. While there, he learned a great deal. Mr. Burls took a fancy to him, and soon came to stand a little in awe of him; for he was educated and honest, and, in addition, plainly a gentleman. The dealer was very ignorant, and, from any point of view but that of his class of traders, very dishonest—that is, he looked upon the public, his customers, as fair game; and would tell any lie, and any sequence of lies, to sell a spurious picture for and at the price of a genuine picture. The morals of commerce, in the hands of the Burlses, find their lowest ebb.

But, to some extent, their customers make them what they are. If a man who has money to spend on his house will have pictures for his walls, why not prefer a new picture to an old one? Why not an honest print before a dishonest canvas?

But it is always the reverse. He has a hundred pounds to lay out, and he wants ten pictures for the money—bargains—speculative pictures, with famous names to them, which he can comment on and enlarge upon, and point out the beauties of to his friends, until he actually comes to believe the daub he gave ten guineas for is a Turner; and the dealers can find him hundreds.

Why, the old masters must have painted pictures faster than they could nowadays print them, if a quarter of the things that that are sold in their names were their true works. There are probably more pictures ascribed to any one famous old master now for sale in the various capitals of Europe, than he could have produced had he painted a complete work every day, from the day he was born till the day he died—and lived to be seventy, too.

Burls could find his customers any thing they asked for. No painter so rare, so sought after, or so obscure, but there were some works of his, a bargain, in the dealer's stock.

He told Frank his history:—

"My father wore a uniform: he was a park-keeper in Kensington Gardens. I

went to school till I was thirteen, then I went out as an errand-boy. My master was a dealer, in St. James Street. I got to learn the gilding and cleaning; and when I was six and twenty, I earned two pounds a week. Well, my father had an old friend, and he had had some money left him. He gave his son two hundred pounds, and we went into business. His son died before we'd been partners a year. I bought his share, and here I am. I shall die worth a hundred thousand pounds, Shipley" — (this was Frank's name at Mr. Burls's) — "and this business thrown in — mark my words."

This was his story, and it was true. Like all men who have risen from nothing, Mr. Burls was inordinately pleased with himself. He attributed to his great ability what really ought to have been put down to his great luck.

He would be a fine specimen for the "Self-help" collection in Mr. Samuel Smiles's book.

"Mind you," he often said to Frank, "there ain't a man in ten thousand that could have done what I've done."

Now, Burls's life, as I read it and as Frank read it, was simply an example of the power of luck. Serving under a kind master, who lets him learn his trade. Luck. Finding a man who wants to put his son into business, and is willing to trust him. Luck. Getting all to himself. Luck. His shop pulled down by the Board of Works, in order to widen a street. Compensation paid just when he wants money, at the end of his second year's trade. Luck. And so on. Look into every adventure he has made, luck crowned it with success. And how we all worship success that brings wealth! Why, weak Mrs. Melliship would rather have seen Frank succeed in making himself as rich as Dick Mortiboy, than that his name should have been handed down to endless centuries as the writer of a greater epic than Milton, or the painter of a greater picture than the greatest of Raphael's cartoons. Frank, on the other hand, never told all his story to his employer; but he was constrained to explain why he was in a position so different to that in which he had been brought up. And he did it in a few words, and without any expression of complaint. Burls only knew that his father had lost money by rash speculation, and had died, leaving Frank without resources. He did not inquire further, but remarked, —

"What ain't in my business is in the three per cent. Consols. Your father's ought to have been there."

Soon there came a very busy time at

cleaning pictures, and Burls asked Frank to help him.

He found it a mighty simple matter, though it rubbed the skin off his fingers at first.

"Lay the canvas down," said Burls, "and rub it. If the varnish comes off after a few rubs of your finger, it's mastic, and I'll all rub off clear down to the paint. If it won't chafe, it's copal; and you must get it off with spirits, and be careful not to take the paint away with it. I've seen that done often."

So Frank and Burls spent much of their time together, chafing the dirty varnish off old pictures. When they had rubbed it off, and got down to the paint, one or the other dipped a wide brush in mastic varnish, dabbed it on like whitewash on a ceiling, and then laid the canvas flat on the floor of the next room.

"It all dries down smooth enough," Burls said. "That's the beauty of it."

And this, gentle British public, is the art of cleaning old oil paintings on a system invented by ourselves, without the slightest injury or damage, advertised by Bartholomew Burls & Co., Church Street, City. County orders carefully attended to. And you are charged for it entirely according to Mr. Burls's belief in your capacity to pay — sometimes ten shillings, sometimes ten pounds; but the process is always the same, and it takes a very slightly skilled laborer any time from fifteen minutes to sixty to complete the operation.

Sometimes the pictures wanted repainting in places: then Frank took them into his own room, and did what was required, before they were varnished off.

"Mind you, cleaning's an art, and I've taught it you," Mr. Burls would say.

For painting and painters he had a proper contempt. He bought their works so cheap; and they — at least, the specimens he saw — were always such poor devils. But gilding frames, cleaning and restoring pictures, — these were profitable arts; and he respected them.

He told Frank many queer anecdotes of the trade, of his customers, and how he had imposed upon their credulity; and how credulous customers are, only such men as Mr. Burls know.

He told him tales of the sales and knock-outs, and one day took him to one at a public-house in Pall Mall, where Frank formed an acquaintance with the habits, customs, and language of the trade, and saw all the lots they had bought at Christie's put up again, and resold among themselves at a good profit.

"Look at that," said Mr. Burls one day to Frank; "that's a seller, ain't it? I lay

you a new hat, I don't have that here a fortnight, and I shall ask sixty guineas for it."

"Is it not the one that has been in the shop some time?" Frank asked.

"No, it ain't; but it's the own brother to it; and here's two more of the family, only they ain't done up yet," said the dealer, pulling down two other canvases from a rack.

Frank opened his eyes — wide.

The pictures were landscapes in the style of Claude. The first was cracked all over, respectably dirty, and looked certainly a hundred years old. The paint of the other two was scarcely dry.

"It would have deceived me, I believe," said Frank.

"Deceive anybody," said Mr. Burls. "Now, you wouldn't look at that picture and think it's only a month old, would you? That's all it is. It was like these here two a month ago. I've sold four or five of 'em."

"It would not do to sell them to intimate friends, would it?" said Frank.

"Trust me for that. I send 'em about the country. I've bought every thing lately at an old maiden lady's at Bexley Heath, and described the place to my customers; but I think I've used it up about. Give us a good name, now, of a place for stuff to come from."

Frank thought a moment, and suggested Compton Green.

"Where's Compton Green?" asked Mr. Burls.

"It's five miles from Market Basing, in Holmshire," said Frank.

"Well, I'll try Compton Green. I've got a customer coming to look at some pictures to-day. I hope it'll be as lucky as Bexley Heath has been. Jack and me's sold some hundred now, I think, from there; so it's time we had a change."

"Do," said Frank. "It has one advantage, at all events, nobody will know it."

"Now I'm going to show my customer this Claude. I wish I'd got a dozen as good. It cost me fifteen pounds; and it wasn't painted half a mile from where we stand. I want some imitations. Couldn't you paint me some?"

Frank tried; and, after some time, succeeded, to Mr. Burls's entire satisfaction, in imitating Old Cuyp.

"That's right enough," said the dealer. "I'll give you ten pound a piece for a dozen as good as that."

Frank was delighted. Here was fortune come at last.

"I'm fair and straight, I am," said the dealer. "There ain't much in painting 'em when you've been showed what's wanted.

It's the doing 'em up. That's a secret as only a few of us have got. It cost me something to learn it, I can tell you. I paid for it, and it's paid me. This picture, when I've done with it, 'll be worth sixty, if it's worth a sovereign. But there's art, I can tell you, in doing what I do to 'em."

There always was, according to Mr. Burls's version of the case, art in doing any thing to a picture but painting it.

Frank watched the processes his picture went through with interest. It went to be lined, and stretched on an old strainer. As it was to be an old picture, the supposed old canvas it was painted on must be concealed by a lining.

Then it received several coats of mastic varnish, in which red and yellow lake and other colors were mixed to tone it down, laid on with Burls's liberal hand. As the first coat dried, a second, and so on.

Then it was brushed over one night with a substance which we have all eaten times without number. In the morning, Frank's Old Cuyp was cracked all over.

He was astonished, and well he might be. The surface, hard and dry, was a network of very thin cracks. It was put into a real old frame of the period, the door-mat shaken over canvas and frame several days in succession, and the business was complete.

The picture looked old and mellow; the cracks bore witness to its genuineness; it had been lined to keep the rotting canvas from dropping to pieces as it stood; but the frame was the one it had always hung in, in the old manor-house at Compton Green.

"It's a simple thing when you know how to do it, ain't it?" asked Mr. Burls of Frank.

"It is, indeed," said the artist, astonished at his own work in its altered guise. "It is simple."

But what that simple thing is I must not tell, or I shall have some of my younger readers trying the experiment of cracking their father's pictures; and it wants some practice to insure success in making the cracks natural in appearance, and not having too many of them.

Frank set to work to make more of these imitations.

He made them to order, not being a party to any deception which his employer might practice. A copy, or an imitation, whichever Mr. Burls wanted. What the dealer chose to do with it when the order was executed was nothing to Frank. At the same time he had a shrewd suspicion, though Burls said nothing, that his pictures were sold as originals. It must be stated that Burls did not always sell a copy as an original. The imitations brought Frank

ten pounds each; but they lost him his employment. In this way.

One day, as he was going out to his tea, when he got as far as the staircase that connected the gallery with the shop, he observed Burls showing some pictures to two customers; one of these was his Old Cuyp.

"Compton Green, I assure you, they all came from," Burls was saying.

"Near Market Basing?" asked a clerical old gentleman, who was one of his two customers.

"That's the place, sir. I fetched 'em all away, myself, I assure you."

"But there is nobody there who ever had any pictures. I live near the village myself."

Here was a facer for the dealer.

He saw Frank, and called him. Frank had given him the name. Frank must get him out of the scrape.

"Here, Shipley"—he winked hard—"you went down with me to fetch these pictures. Tell this gentleman the house we got 'em from. It's a genuine Cuyp as ever I sold, sir,"—Frank was coming up the shop, and the old gentleman's back was turned towards him—"and it's a cheap picture at sixty guineas. I would not take pounds for it."

By this time Frank was close to him.

"Tell this gentleman where we got these pictures from, every one of them. You went with me."

Burls made a great mistake in his man. Frank was not going to tell lies for him. Besides, he knew the customer.

The old gentleman turned round, and saw him before he could escape. He fell back a step or two, shaded his eyes with his hand, looked very hard at Frank, then exclaimed, cordially holding out his hand,—

"God bless me! Young Mr. Melliship!"

"Dr. Perkins!" stammered Frank.

"My dear young gentleman, who ever would have thought of seeing you here?"

Frank was interrupted in a rambling apology by Mr. Burls.

"Very clever young man, invaluable to me. He'll tell you"—here he winked again at Frank—"all about the place we fetched them from."

"Well, I shall have some other things to talk about with him of more importance; but, perhaps he will excuse me if, to settle this, I ask where possibly at Compton Green there could be pictures without my knowing it?"

"Ah!" said Burls, "he can tell you. I go into so many houses, I forget where they are almost."

"Nowhere," said Frank, looking Dr.

Perkins, whom he knew was an old friend of his father's, full in the face. "I painted it myself."

And he was gone out of the shop. It was in vain the old clergyman and his son-in-law tried to overtake him. They soon lost sight of him in the crowded street.

CHAPTER XXII.

"I MUST tell you," wrote Grace to Kate, "of the great day we had at Dergate. You know all the dreadful news, because Lucy has told you, how Uncle Mortiboy, after he had given all his money to Dick, had a paralytic stroke, and is quite helpless now. He seems to know people, though he cannot speak. He gives a sort of grunt for 'yes,' and frowns when he means 'no.' Though we feel sure he will never recover his faculties again, poor old man, he is not at all a pitiable object to look at. He has completely lost the use of one side, and partially that of the other.

His face is drawn curiously out of shape, and it gives him a happy and pleasant look he never used to have. He actually looks as if he were smiling all the while, a thing, as you know, he did not often do. They have taken him down stairs, and old Hester looks after him. Dick has moved into that little villa which stands across the river, the only house there. He has a boat to go across in. It seems a prosaic way of getting over a river for a man who knows all about California and Texas, doesn't it? I told him that we all expected him to strike out a new idea.

"But the moving was the great thing. He asked us all there to come down while he ransacked the old house. So down we went. We went in to see poor old Mr. Mortiboy, and he seemed to know us, and to want to speak; but it was no use. Then our voyage of discovery began. We had Mr. Tweedy, the builder, who went about with the house-steps and a hammer. He went first. Dick came next. We followed, pretending not to be at all curious; and old Hester brought up the rear.

"First, Aunt Susan's room. Then we opened all her drawers, boxes and cupboards. There was nothing in one of them except old letters and things of no interest or value. 'The old man,' Dick said, 'has been here before us.' I don't think that it's nice of him to speak of his father in that way; though mamma always declares that his voice always shakes as he does it. All poor aunt's dresses were hanging up just as she had left them. Dick gave every one to mamma, with her lace—your

know what beautiful lace Aunt Susan had. There is not much, after all; for she never dressed very well, as you know. Mamma transferred the gowns to old Hester on the spot, and kept the lace, of course.

"Then we went down stairs to the first floor, Mr. Mortiboy's own floor. Here we had a surprise. In the room was a long press, which Dick opened. My dear Kate, it was full of gold and silver cups, and plate of all kinds.

"Dick tossed them all on the table with his usual careless manner.

"Now, cousins," he said, 'if you can find any thing here with the Heathcote crest on it, take it.'

"I found an old cup, which must have been my great-grandfather's, which I took home to papa.

"I am going to pick out the Mortiboy plate," said Dick, 'and sell all the rest.'

"O Kate! among the rest was a great deal of yours, which Uncle Mortiboy had bought up from the sale. I waited till mamma was not looking, and I begged him not to sell that. He did not know that it was yours, and promised. So that is all safe for the present. And then he produced Aunt Susan's jewels and trinkets, and divided them between Lucy and me. I shall have such splendors to show you when we meet again. It is old-fashioned, of course, but very good.

"Then he put all the things back again.

"We're going to look for money," he said. 'Hester says he used to hide it away.'

"Then we saw the use of the steps and the hammer. Mr. Tweedy went about hammering everywhere, to see if things were solid or hollow. In a window-seat which he forced open—it had been screwed down—we found a bag full of guineas. I have one of them now. Behind a panel of the wainscoting, which had a secret spring—I did not know there were any houses in Market Basing with secret springs and panels—we found—not a skeleton, my dear, with a dagger stuck in its ribs, as there ought to have been in a secret cupboard,—but another bag, with thirty old spade guineas in it. Wherever a hiding-place could be made, Uncle Mortiboy had hidden away some money. There was quite a handsome sum in an old and well-darned stocking foot, and ever so many guineas under his bed. He seems to have had a great penchant for saving guineas. Hester says he thought they brought luck.

"How much is left to find, of course we cannot tell. It seems now that he was never quite easy in his mind about the things in his house. You know their queer,

narrow, old staircase? Well, he used always to take his after-dinner nap on the stairs, where nothing could pass him without awaking him; and he used to pay the policeman extra money for giving a special look at the house. How it was he was not robbed, I can't think.

"After all this, we went home, loaded with spoil. Mamma began again about Dick's 'intentions;' but that only annoys me a very little, now.

"Dick has got old Mrs. Lumley, whom you know, to look after him. But he won't let her sleep in the house. He fired pistols at his first woman, and she ran away. But Mrs. Lumley is not afraid, and I haven't heard of any pistols being fired at her.

"When are you going to give me fresh news of Frank? Kate, dear, give him my love, my real and only love, and tell him not to forget me, and to keep up his courage. If he would only be helped, all would be well. I am sure papa liked him better than anybody that came to Park-side. And, after all, papa—is papa."

It was a fine time, this, for Polly. She had plenty of Dick's society. He was at home nearly every evening, and generally alone. Then she would sit with him while he drank, smoked, told her queer stories, and sang to her jovial sea-songs. As for her, she always behaved as a lady: put on a silk dress every evening, and invariably had her bottle of port before her, carrying her adherence to the usages of polite society so far as very often to finish it.

Occasional wayfarers along the towing-path would hear sounds of merriment and singing. It was whispered that Dick Mortiboy even entertained the Evil One himself, and regaled him with cigars and brandy.

Sometimes they played at cards, games that Dick taught her. Sometimes they used to quarrel, but not often; because, once, when she threatened her husband, he took her by the shoulders, and turned her out of doors.

Her venerable parent was a bedridden old lady, of prepossessing ugliness, who resided in a cottage, neither picturesque nor clean, in the outskirts of Market Basing. By the assistance of her daughter, she was able to rub along and get her small comforts. She was not a nice old lady to look at, nor was she eminently moral; being one of those who hold that lies cost nothing, and very often bring in a good deal.

"Get money out of him, Polly," she said. "Get as much as you can; it won't last, you know."

"And why shouldn't it last? What's to prevent it lasting, you old croaker?"

"The other will turn up some day, Polly. I know it, I'm certain of it. Make him give you money. Tell him it's for Bill."

"Mother, Dick's no fool. I've had fifty pounds out of him for little Bill in the last four months. I told him, only a fortnight ago, that Bill had got the scarlet fever! and he told me to go to the devil. He's deep, too. He doesn't say any thing, but he's down on you all of a sudden. Mother, I lie awake at night, and tremble sometimes. I'm afraid of him, he is so masterful."

"But try, Polly, my dear, try. Tell him I want things at my time of life."

"I might do that. But it's no use pretending any thing about Bill for a while. The other night he said Bill was played out. He wants to know where the boy is, too."

"Where is he, Polly? Tell your old mother, deary."

"Sha'n't," said Polly.

She made a long story about her mother that very night, and coaxed ten pounds out of Dick for her. The old woman clutched the gold, and put it away under her pillow, where she kept all the money that Polly got out of Dick.

It was odd that he could endure the woman at all. She was rough-handed, rough-tongued, coarse-minded, intriguing, and crafty, and he knew it. Her tastes were of the lowest kinds. She liked to eat and drink, and do little work. They had no topics in common. But he was lazy, and liked to "let things slide." She had all the faults that a woman can have; but she had a sort of cleverness which was not displeasing to him. Sometimes he would hate her. This was generally after he had been spending an evening at Parkside, almost the only house he visited.

Here, under the influence of the two girls and their father, he became subdued and sobered. The subtle influence of the pure and sweet domestic life was strong enough to touch him, to move him, but not to bring him back.

The sins of youth are never forgiven or forgotten. Now, when all else went well with Dick, when things had turned out beyond his wildest hopes, this woman, whom he had married in a fit of calf love, stood in his way, and seemed to drag him down again when he would fain have risen above his own level. Other things had passed away and been forgotten. There was no fear that the old Palmiste business would be revived. Facts and reports, ugly enough, were safe across the Atlantic. Of the twelve years of Bohemian existence, no one knew: they were lost to history as completely as the forty years' wandering

of the Israelites. Only Lafleur, who was sure to keep silent for his own sake, knew. And this woman, alone, stood in the way, warning him back from the paths of respectability—an Apollyon whom it was impossible to pass.

But one evening, Polly, who had come in to see him, cried in a maudlin way over the love she had for the boy; and, pulling her handkerchief out of her pocket to dry her eyes, dragged with it a letter, which Dick, who was sitting opposite her and not too far off, instantly covered with his foot. Ignorant of her loss, she went on crying till the fit passed; and, then, finishing off the port, marched away in rather a corkscrew fashion. Dick, lifting his foot, picked up the letter and read it.

It was a very odd epistle, and was dated from some suburb of London of which he knew nothing, called "Paragon-place, Gray's Inn Road."

The orthography was that of a person imperfectly educated, and Dick deciphered it with some difficulty.

"MY DEER POLY"—it went—"excuse Me trubbling you butt im hard up, haveing six of theemm Cussed babies to look after and methoosalem and Little bill do eat ther Heds of and what with methoosalem as wont wurk and bill as Wont Prig im most crasy with them you Owe me for six munths which six Pound ten and hope as youll send me the munney sharp as Else bill he cuts his lucky so as hes your own Son and not mine i dont see wy should kepe him any longer for Nuthink and remain dear poly your affeckshunitt

"ANN MARIA KNEEBONE.

"P.s. — [This in another hand]—i see the old woman a ritin her letter wich it toke her hall day and the babies a starvin, so i had a P. s. to say as she is verry hard up and so am i and so is bill.

"METHOOSALEM."

Dick read this precious epistle with a look of extreme bewilderment. Then he read it over again. Gradually arriving at a sense of its meaning, he looked again at the address and the name, so as not to forget them—he never forgot any thing—and then he twisted it up and burned it in the candle. After that he went to bed, putting off meditation till the following morning. Dick was not going to spoil his night's rest because Polly had told him lies.

Little Bill—that was Polly's child, presumably, therefore, his as well; therefore, little William Mortiboy—the heir-apparent to his father's fortunes.

"William Mortiboy's position," said Dick

to himself next morning after breakfast, "appears unsatisfactory. He lives with a lady named Kneebone, who has a lodging-house for babies. Wonder if the babies like the lodgings? William Mortiboy associates, apparently, with a gentleman called Methoosalem, who refuses to work. Is he one of the babies? Wonder if he is! William Mortiboy is expected to prig. That's a devilish bad beginning for William. William Mortiboy's companions are not, apparently, the heir to any thing — not even what the man in the play calls a stainless name. Polly, I'm afraid you're a bad lot!

Anyhow, you might have paid the five bob a week out of all the money you've had in the last four months. But we'll be even with you. Only wait a bit, my lady."

CHAPTER XXIII.

It was a godly and an ancient custom in Market Basing, that on a certain Sunday afternoon in the year, the children should have a "church parade" all to themselves, followed by a bun. Of late years, an addition had been made to this festival by setting apart a week-day in the summer for a school feast and treat. It was generally a dreary affair enough. The boys and girls were marshalled, and marched to some field not far off, where they were turned loose previous to the tea, and told to play. As the Market Basing boys saw no novelty in a field, — unlike the Londoner, to whom a bird's nest is a new discovery, and a field-mouse the most remarkable of wild animals — these feasts, although preceded by cake and followed by tea, had no great charms. Perhaps they were overweighted by hymns.

Now, Dick, pursuing that career of social usefulness already hinted at, had succeeded, in a very few weeks, in alienating the affection of all the spiritual leaders of the town. The way was this. First, he refused to belong to the chapel any more, and declined to pay for a pew in the church, on the reasonable ground that he did not intend to go to either. They came to him — Market Basing was regularly whipped and driven to religion, if not to godliness — to give money to their pet society, which, they said, called alike for the support of church and chapel, for providing humble breakfasts and flannel in winter for the deserving poor. This was explained to mean, not the industrious poor nor the provident poor, nor the sober poor, but the poor who attended some place of worship. Dick said that not going to church did not of itself prove a man to be irreligious, artfully instancing

himself as a case in point; and refused to help.

Then the secretaries of London societies, finding out that there was another man who had money to give, and was shown already to be of liberal disposition, sent him begging letters through the curates. They all got much the same answer. The missionary societies were dismissed because, as Dick told them, he had seen missionaries with his own eyes. That noble institution in Lincoln's Inn Fields, which exists for the double purpose of maintaining a large staff and converting the Jews, was refused on the ground of no results commensurable with the expense. He offered, indeed, a large sum for a successful mission among the professions — especially the bar — in England; and he rashly proposed a very handsome prize — no less than a thousand pounds — to anybody who would succeed in converting him. Rev. Potiphar Demas, a needy vessel, volunteered; but Dick declined to hear him, because he didn't want to know what Mr. Demas had to say. Now, this seemed discourteous to the reverend gentleman.

All this might have been counterbalanced by his many virtues. For it was notorious that he had given a pension to old Sanderson, the ruined cashier of Melliship's bank; also that he had withdrawn the Mortiboy claims on the Melliship estate: this was almost as if the Americans were to withdraw their Alabama claims, because there was no knowing where they might end. Besides which, it made an immediate difference of four shillings in the pound. Further, sundry aged persons who had spent a long life in cursing the name of Mortiboy took to praising it altogether, because Dick was helping them all. And the liberality toward his clerks with which he inaugurated his reign was almost enough of itself to make him popular.

But then came that really dreadful business about the old women. This, although he was gaining a golden name by making restitution for his father's ill deeds — like Solomon repairing the breaches which his father David had made — was enough to make all religious and right-minded people tremble in their shoes. Everybody knows that humility in the aged poor is the main virtue which they are expected to display. In the church at Market Basing was a broad middle aisle, down which was ranged a row of wooden benches, backless, cushionless, hard, and unpromising. On them sat, Sunday after Sunday, at these services, constant, never-flagging, all the old women in the parish. It was a gruesome assemblage: toothless, rheumatic, afflicted with divers pains and infirmities, they yet

struggled, Sunday after Sunday, to the "free seats," so called by a bitter mockery because those who sat in them had no other choice but to go.

On their regular attendance depended, not so much their daily bread, which the workhouse might have given them, but their daily comforts; their tea and sugar; their wine if they were ill — and they always were ill; their blankets and their coals. Now, will it be believed that Dick, instigated by Ghrimes, who held the revolutionary maxim that religion, if it is to be real, ought not to be made a condition of charity, actually found out the names of these old trots, and made a weekly dole among them, without any condition whatever? It was so. He really did it. After two or three Sundays the free seats were empty, all the old women having gone to different conventicles, where they got their religion hot and hot, as they liked it; where they sat in comfortable pews, like the rest of the folks; and where they were treated as if, in the house of God, all men are alike and equal. When the curates called, they were cheeky; when they threatened, the misguided old ladies laughed; when they blustered, these backsliders, relying on their Dick, cracked their aged fingers in the young men's faces.

"He is a very dreadful man," said the rector. "What shall we do with him?"

He called. He explained the danger which befell these ignorant though elderly persons in frequenting an uncovenanted place of worship; but he spoke to deaf ears. Dick understood him not.

It was the time of the annual school feast. Dick was sitting, in that exasperating Californian jacket, in the little back parlor, consecrated to black cloth and respectability. His legs were on the window sill, his mouth had a cigar in it, his face was beaming with jollity, his heart was as light as a child's. All this was very bad.

Foiled in his first attempt, the rector made a second.

"There is another matter, Mr. Mortiboy, on which I would speak with you."

"Speak, Mr. Lightwood," said Dick. "Don't ask me for any money for the missionaries."

"I will not," said good old Mr. Lightwood mournfully. "I fear it would be of little use."

Dick pulled his beard and grinned. Why this universal tendency of mankind to laugh when, from a position of strength, they are about to do something disagreeable?

"It is not about any of our societies, Mr. Mortiboy. But I would fain hope that you will not refuse a trifle to our children's

school feast. We give them games, races, and so forth, with tea and cake. We are very short of funds."

"Do you?" cried Dick. "Look here, sir. What would you say if I offered to stand the whole thing — pay for the bust myself — grub, liquors, and prizes?"

The rector was dumbfounded. It had hitherto been one of his annual difficulties to raise the money for his little *fête*, for St. Giles's parish was very large, and the parishioners generally poor. And here was a man offering to pay for every thing!

Then Dick, who could never be a wholly submissive son of the Church, must needs put in a condition which spoiled it.

"All the children, mind. None of your Church children only."

"It has always been confined to our own children, Mr. Mortiboy. The Dissenters have their — ahem! their — their — treat at another time."

"Very well, then. Here is my offer. I will pay for the supper, or dinner, or whatever you call it, to as many Market Basing children as like to come. I don't care whether they are Jews or Christians. That is their look-out, not mine. Take my offer, Mr. Lightwood. If you refuse, by Jove, I'll have a day of my own, and choose your day. We'll see who gets most youngsters. If you accept, you shall say grace, and do all the pious part yourself. Come, lets us oblige each other. I am really sorry to refuse you so often; and here is a chance."

What was to be done with this dreadful man? If you crossed him, he was capable of ruining every thing; and to yield to him was to give up half your dignity. But concession meant happiness to the children; and the good old clergyman, who could not possibly understand the attitude of mind of his new parishioner, seeing only perversity where half was experience and half ignorance, yielded at once and gracefully.

Dick immediately assumed the whole conduct of the affair. Without making any reference to the church or chapel, he issued handbills stating that sports, to which all the children in the place were invited, would be held on the following Wednesday, in his own paddock at Derngate. Then followed a goodly list of prizes to be run for, jumped for, wrestled for, and in other ways offered to public competition. And it became known that preparations were making on the most liberal scale. There was to be a dinner at one, a tea at five, and a supper at eight. There were to be fireworks. Above all, the races and prizes.

Dick had no notion of doing a thing by halves. He got an itinerant circus from a neighbouring fair, a wild-beast show, a Punch and Judy, swing-boats, a roundabout,

and a performing monkey. Then he hired a magic lantern, and erected a tent where it was to be seen all day. He hired donkeys for races, got hundreds of colored lamps from town, built an enormous marquee where any number of children might sit down to dinner, and sent out messengers to ascertain how many guests might be expected.

This was the happiest period in Dick's life. The possessor of a princely income, the owner of an enormous fortune, he had but to lift his hand, and misery seemed to vanish. Justice, the propagation of prudential motives, religion, natural retribution for broken laws, all these are advanced ideas, of which Dick had but small conception.

Grace Heathcote described the day in one of her letters to Kate — those letters which were almost the only pleasure the poor girl had at this time : —

"As for the day, my dear, it was wonderful. I felt inclined to defend the climate of England at the point of the sword — I mean the needle. Dick, of course, threw California in my teeth. As we drove down the road in the waggonette, the grand old trees in the park were rustling in their lovely July foliage like a great lady in her court dress. The simile was suggested to me by mamma, who wore her green silk. Lucy and I were dressed alike — in white muslin. I had pink ribbons, and she wore blue; and round my neck was the locket with F.'s portrait in it, which you sent me — you good kind, thoughtful Kate! Mamma does not like to see it; but you know my rebellious disposition. And papa took it in his fingers, and then pinched my cheek, as much as to say that he highly approved of my conduct. Oh! I know the dear old man's heart. I talk to him out in the fields, and find out all his little secrets. Men, my dear Kate, even if they are your own father, are all as simple as — what shall I say? — as Frank and papa.

"We got into Market Basing at twelve. The town was just exactly like market day, only without the smell of vegetables. It felt like Christmas Day in the summer. You know the paddock? It is not very big, but it was big enough. The front lawn of Derngate — poor old Uncle Mortiboy inside, not knowing what was going on! was covered with a great marquee. The paddock had a racecourse marked round it, and a platform and posts between, which were festooned with colored lamps. All the children, in their Sunday best, were gathering about the place, waiting to be admitted.

"As we drove up, Dick came out, with a cigar between his teeth, of course, and the

crowd gave a great cheer. Mamma said it seemed as if it was meant for us; and so we all got out of the waggonette, trying to look like princesses; and Dick helped us, and they all cheered again. Really, I felt almost like Royalty; which, my dear Kate, must be a state of life demanding a great strain upon the nerves, and a constant worry to know whether your bonnet is sitting properly.

"Are we looking our best, Dick?' I asked, anxious to know.

"Your very best," he said. 'I take it as a compliment to my boys and girls.'

"I wish that woman Mary, our old servant, had not been standing close by. She gave me a look — such a look as I never had before — as if I was doing her some mortal injury; and then turned away, and I saw her no more all day. I declare there's always something. If ever I felt happy in my life — except one day when Frank told me he loved me — it was last Wednesday; and that woman really spoiled at least one hour of the day for me, because she made me feel so uncomfortable. I wish she would go away.

"As one o'clock struck, the band — did I tell you there was a band? A real band, Kate, the militia band from the Stores — struck up 'The Roast Beef of Old England,' and Dick in five minutes had all the boys and girls in to dinner.

"The rector, and his curates, and the dissenting ministers — and what the paper called 'a select company,' which means ourselves chiefly — were present. We all sat down; I next to Dick on his left hand, mamma on his right. The rector said grace. Dick whispered that we could not have too much Grace — his Californian way of expressing satisfaction at my personal appearance — and we began to eat and drink. Spare me the details.

"One, P.M., to two, P.M.: legs of mutton, and rounds of beef, and huge plum puddings.

"Two, P.M., to three, P.M.: the cherubs are all gorged, and lying about in lazy contentment, too happy to tease each other, and too lazy to do any mischief. Old Hester crying.

"What for, Hester?"

"O miss! to think that Miss Susan never lived too see him come home again. And she so fond of him. And he so good and so kind."

"Poor old Hester! She follows her boy, as she calls him, about with her eyes. I have even seen her stroke the tails of his coat when he wasn't looking. Do men ever know how fond women are of them? And Dick is kind and good. He really is, Kate.

"At three, the games. And here a most

wonderful surprise. Who should drive up to the paddock but Lord Hunslope himself, and the countess — who always gives me a cold shiver — and Lord Launton? The earl marched straight up to us, and shook hands with papa.

"Pray, Mr. Heathcote," he said, in his lordliest way, "introduce Mr. Mortiboy to me."

"The Heathcotes had Parkside and Hunslope too before ever the Launtons had left their counters in the city; but, of course, we didn't insist on our superior rank at such a moment.

"Dick took off his hat with that curious pride of equality which comes, I suppose, of having estates in Mexico and being able to throw the lasso. The countess shook hands with everybody; and Lord Launton, blushing horribly, dropped his stick, and shook hands too, after he had picked it up. I am quite sure that if Lord Launton, when he becomes a peer, could only have the gas turned off before he begins to speak, he would be made prime minister in a week. As it is, poor young man!

"We all — I mean the aristocracy — staid together the whole afternoon, bowing affably to our friends of a lower rank in life — the Battiscombe girls, and the Kerybs, and the rector's wife. I really do not know how I am to descend again. The earl made some most valuable remarks, which ought to be committed to writing for posterity. They may be found, though, scattered here and there about the pages of English literature. The curious may look for them. You see, 'Les esprits forts se rencontrent.'

"After the games, the earl gave away the prizes. I send you the local paper, giving an account of the proceedings. Little Stebbing, Mr. Battiscombe's clerk, was acting as reporter, and making an immense parade at a small table, which he brought himself. I never saw any one look so important. I spoke to him once.

"Pray, miss," he said, "do not interrupt me. I represent the press. The fourth estate, miss. I'm afraid I sha'n't have enough flimsy."

"Those were his very words, Kate. By flimsy, I learn that he meant writing paper. Do our great poets — does my adored Tennyson — write on 'flimsy'? Then the Early party went away, and I made a pun, which you may guess; then we had tea; then we had dancing to the band on the platform — Dick waltzes like a German angel; and then we had supper. And then, Oh, my dear Kate — alas! alas! such a disastrous termination to the evening; for Dick put his foot into all the proprieties. It was when they proposed his health. He

hadn't fired pistols at anybody, or taken the name of the missionaries in vain, or worn a Panama hat, or done any thing disgraceful at all. And now it was to come. My poor cousin Dick! How will he get over it?

"They proposed his health after supper. The children were simply intoxicated, not with beer, for they had none: only lemonade and sweet things, but with fun, fireworks, and fruit tart. They cheered till their dear little throats were hoarse. Even the ugliest, reddest-faced, turnederup-nosed girl looked pretty when papa called on them to drink the health of the giver of the feast. My own heart swelled, and Lucy cried outright.

"Then Dick got up. My dear, he looked simply grand in the flicker of the gas jets stirred about by the wind. He stood up, tall and strong, high above us all, and passed his left hand down his long black beard. His brown eyes are so soft sometimes, too. They were soft now; and his under-lip has a way of trembling when he is moved. He was moved now. I can't remember all his speech. He began by telling the children that he was more happy to have them about him than they to come. Then he began good advice. No one knows how wise Dick is. He told them that what they wanted was fresh air, plenty of grub — his word, Kate, not mine — and not too many books. Here they all screamed, and the clergymen shook their precious heads. I said, 'Hear, hear,' and mamma touched me on my arm. It is wrong, of course, in a young lady to have any opinions at all which the male sex do not first instil into her tender mind. Then he called their attention to the fact that they were not always going to be children; and that, if they wanted plenty to eat, they would have to work hard for it. And then he said, impressively shaking an enormous great fist at them, —

"And now, my boys and girls, remember this. Don't you believe people who tell you to be contented with what you've got. That's all nonsense. *You've got to be discontented.* The world is full of good things for those who have the courage to get up and seize them. Look round in your houses, and see what you have: then look round in rich men's houses — say mine and the rector's, and see what we've got. Then be discontented with your own position till you're all rich too."

"Here the rector rose, with a very red face.

"I cannot listen to this, Mr. Mortiboy, I must not listen to it. You are undoing the Church's teaching."

"I've got nothing to do with the Church."

"'You are attacking the Church's Catechism.'

"Does the Catechism teach boys to be contented?'

"It does, in explicit terms.'

"Then the Catechism is a most immoral book.'

"Dick wagged his head solemnly.

"Boys and girls, chuck the Catechism into the fire, and be discontented.'

"Here the rector solemnly left the tent, and everybody looked serious. Dick took no notice, and went on.

"I'll tell you a story. In an English town that I know, there were two boys and two girls. They were all four poor, like most of you. They grew up in their native place till they were eighteen and twenty, and the boys fell in love with the girls. One was a contented fellow. His father had been a farm laborer, like some of your fathers. He would go on being a farm laborer. The other read that the world was full of ground that only waited for a man to dig it up; and he went away. I saw him last year. He had been out for four years. He had a farm, my boys, stocked with cattle and horses, all his own. Think of that! And he had a wife, my girls; his old sweetheart, come out to marry him. Think of that! Then I came home. I saw the other boy, a farm laborer still! He was bent with rheumatism already, because he was a slave. He had no money: no home, no prospects. And the girl he was to have married — well, my girls, if your teachers are worth their salt, they'll tell you what became of that girl. Go out into the world, boys. Don't stick here, crowding out the place, and trying to be called gentlemen. What the devil do you want a black coat for till you have earned it? Go out into the beautiful places in the world, and learn what a man is really worth. And now I hope you've all enjoyed yourselves. And so good-night.'

"O Kate, Kate! here was a firebrand in our very midst. And people are going about, saying that Dick is an infidel. But they can't shake his popularity, for the town loves his very name."

Grace's letter was all true. Dick actually said it. It was his solitary public oration. It had a profound effect. In the half-lighted marquee, as the big-bearded man stood towering over the children, with his right arm waving them out into the world — where? No matter where: somewhere away: somewhere into the good places of the world — not a boy's heart but was stirred within him: and the brave old English blood rose in them as he spoke, in

his deep bass tones, of the worth of a single man in those far-off lands; an oration destined to bear fruit in after-days, when the lads, who talk yet with bated breath of the speech and the speaker, shall grow to man's estate.

"Dangerous, Dick," said Farmer John. "What should I do without my laborers."

"Don't be afraid," said Dick. "There are not ten per cent. have the pluck to go. Let us help them, and you shall keep the rest."

CHAPTER XXIV.

WHEN Frank left Mr. Burls's shop, he felt that he had left it for good. It was Monday evening at five o'clock. He had received the money due to him for painting and restoring on Saturday evening as usual; therefore, all that the dealer owed him for was one day's work. This sum he determined to make Mr. Burls a present of. It was better they should not meet — at least, for the present, Frank thought. For the sake of earning money, he had borne for three months the coarse vulgarity and purse-proud insolence of Burls. He had felt that he should not be able to bear it much longer. The time had come. He had spoken the truth. The penalty was dismissal in any thing but polite terms. He had seen Burls kick a man out of his shop for an offence which, compared to what he had done, was a trifle light as the air. He felt he could work for such a knave, but he could not condescend to fight with him. So he prudently resolved to keep away, and dismissed himself there and then.

It was not very likely that worthy old Dr. Perkins would be able to overtake Frank; for he was a stout gentleman of sixty, more accustomed to jog behind his cob along the white Holmshire roads, than to run full pelt down a London street. Nor was his son-in-law of much assistance in the matter; for losing sight of his impulsive relative after the first few strides, and not catching a glimpse of Frank, he prudently devoted himself to the task of finding out where Dr. Perkins had disappeared to, and three or four minutes after found him making the most profuse apologies to a buxom lady he had nearly upset in turning the corner of the street. They did not return to Mr. Burls's shop; but, calling a four-wheeler, drove to their hotel.

"I shall communicate at once with that young man's friends," said this excellent old clergyman, as soon as he had recovered his breath. "I am shocked and grieved

to see him wandering about like a child of Ishmael in the wilderness of houses. It would kill me. Only think of a young fellow brought up as he was, being reduced to such a pass! Nobody blames his unfortunate father now. There are plenty to help him and his poor dear mother and sister, and he shall be put in a way of doing something for himself without a day's delay."

It was not to be surprised at, that Frank was not overtaken by the friends who pursued him; for he had turned up a court—entered by a low archway, with shops on each side of it—while they had shot past it, keeping on their way straight down the street. In this court, at a comfortable eating-house, Frank was in the habit of taking his meals. He had his pot of tea, bread and butter, and watercresses, read the evening paper as usual, and started to walk home to his lodgings at Islington, just as the two gentlemen, who would have given almost any thing to know where he was, were sitting down to their dinner at the Tavistock in Covent Garden.

"It must have come to this very soon," he thought, as he walked homewards; but he felt rather down at being again a man without an employment. "I couldn't have stood his company much longer. But I am such an unlucky beggar: if it had happened a fortnight ago, or a week or two hence, I should not have owed that confounded landlady any thing."

The truth was, ever since Frank had been in Mr. Burls's employment, he had sent as much money as he could possibly scrape together by post-office order to his mother and sister, living in a farmhouse in the romantic village of Llan-y-Fyddloes. Their little income of two pounds a week was quite enough for their modest wants there, Kate often told him, in her weekly letter—a chronicle of small beer Frank looked forward to on a Monday morning with a feverish longing; for did it not always contain a letter from Grace, his love, to her dear friend Kate, which Mistress Kate enclosed for him to read, but which he never, on one single occasion, sent back in his next, as Kate invariably desired him to do? But Frank knew, though the money would not be spent, it would cheer his mother, and, for the matter of that, Kate too. They would have the strongest possible proof that he was getting on in the world. He had more than he wanted for himself, and could contribute to their support; and he wrote very flourishing accounts of how he was selling his works, and Kate would perceive how necessary it was for him to see Hampstead, and Highgate, and Richmond, and other of those charming suburbs of London, to fill his sketch-book with

pretty bits; so she was to consider him a gypsy student of art, now camping here, now there, not tied to any spot above a week or so, roaming at his royal pleasure in search of the picturesque. And so letters to him, to avoid delays, had better be addressed to a certain post-office, for Francis Melliship, Esquire, till called for; and as he was in London very often, he would always call when he expected a letter from her or from his mother, and they were the only people he wrote to now.

Not one word of the drudgery in Burls's manufactory of the sham antique; not one word of the dingy lodging in the back street; not one word of the groans of the lover's heart at the hopeless distance that still lay between Frank Melliship and Grace Heathcote.

In his letters, all was rose-colored.

"Do you know, I really think Frank will do well, Kate," Mrs. Melliship said. "It is plain he is getting on with his pictures. I wish he had not so much boyish pride."

"Mamma, Frank is independent. He relies on himself, as a man should. I admire him for it."

"Well, my dear, I never heard of an artist that was what I call well off who wasn't an R.A. Who was that R.A. your father used to invite to stay with us?—the man that used to stop the carriage while he sketched things—dear me, I know it quite well! And when Frank could be an R.A., if he could get on as fast as possible, I don't really quite know, though it must be some years, of course. But he is certainly doing well, for he has sent us ten pounds twice within a month. No, I am wrong—five weeks. He is a dear good boy; and I feel our misfortune more for him, Kate, than for you and me. Oh, dear! they all know it wasn't your poor father's fault at all; and I'm sure John Heathcote, besides many others I could mention, would do any thing in the world for Frank. I suppose, poor boy, he has set his heart on Grace?"

"Yes," said Kate demurely.

"Well, I always loved Grace and Lucy very much, and I could treat her as a daughter, and I should like to see Frank married and happy. I've heard your poor father say very often that John Heathcote could settle a handsome sum on his daughters when they married; and Kate, my dear, I think we ought to know Frank's address in London, and give it to friends who want to help him, and are always writing to me about it. A letter left at a post-office always reminds me so of Florence, where I was so miserable, because my dear mother died there; and we did not always get the letters that we had no reasonable

doubt were posted to us — long before I married your poor father, Kate."

"Yes, mamma," Kate said mechanically.

Her mother would run on for an hour from subject to subject; and Kate often was thinking of something else, and only spoke when her mother came to a stop. Mrs. Melliship proceeded, —

"I certainly like this village, though the name, and, for the matter of that, the people, are very outlandish; and I should not care to go back to Market Basing, Kate, unless I could have my carriage. We used to visit people such a distance in the country, and we could not well do it without a carriage."

"Oh! don't let us go back to Market Basing, mamma. I like Wales so much."

"Well, my dear, I shall live wherever you wish me to; for I may say I live now entirely for you and Frank."

Here the simple lady took out her handkerchief, and shed a few tears, a termination to her speeches more common than not.

Then the two women kissed and comforted each other; and Kate found a book to amuse her mother.

Frank was in the habit of working an hour or two by gaslight of an evening, with pencil or crayons; but he was rather disgusted with art that night, and looked round his little sitting-room in a gloomy mood.

"Ah!" he said, "if people who must have pictures for their houses would only buy an honest new picture instead of a spurious old one, artists might live. After all, the worst of our works are better than what they do buy: they are what they appear. Why not go to the exhibitions, and buy some of the unsold pictures there? Or come to a fellow's place? We're poor enough to be modest in our charges. But they will have real Old Masters at ten pounds a piece; and there the dealers beat us. Art! There is no feeling for art in England; no desire to encourage artists of any kind. They're only a lowish sort of fellows. And then the beggars must go to dealers to buy their ancestors!"

He laughed savagely, and stuck the end of his brush through a half-finished sketch on paper.

"I wonder who'll paint Burls's genuine old pictures now; and dodge up the rubbish from the sales, and clean, and tone, and line, and varnish, and crack? What humbug it all is!"

There was a knock at the door, and his landlady's grubby little daughter gave him a note written on a sheet of paper, and

enclosed in an envelope she had ten minutes before sent the young lady out to purchase for a halfpenny at the shop round the corner.

The corner bore the family impress — a dirty finger and thumb they put on every thing they touched.

Frank laughed. He never could be surly with a child in his life.

"Tell your mother I'll see her before I go out in the morning."

He owed two pounds four and sixpence for rent and commodities supplied, and he had only sixteen and sixpence to pay it with; which, under all the circumstances of the case, was awkward.

What wonders a good night's rest will effect!

In the morning, Frank paid his landlady ten shillings on account, listened to her impertinence without a reply, and quietly told her to let his lodgings, and keep his portmanteau for security till he paid her. He should not come back again, except to fetch away his things.

He had dressed himself in a new suit of clothes he had ordered on the strength of his successful manufacture of Old Cuyps and other masters. Nothing could make Frank look other than a gentleman; but to-day he looked quite like his old self of six months ago. He was not at all miserable; on the contrary, he felt quite happy and cheerful.

To be sure, it was a bright day — not too warm — when merely to breath is a pleasure, even if you are a convict in Portland. Besides, he was free from a drudgery at which his soul had always revolted.

"But what next?" he asked himself. "Anyhow, I've done with painting. No more oils for me."

Passing a pawnbroker's as he spoke, he went in, for the first time in his life, and asked how much the man would advance on his watch and chain. He thanked the man for his information, and left the shop with his watch in his pocket.

"By Jove!" he said, "here's a new source of wealth. I can pawn every thing by degrees."

Then he strolled westwards.

The omnibuses had blue and white posters on them — "To Lord's Cricket Ground."

"Why, it's the Oxford and Cambridge match to-day."

Without stopping to think twice, he jumped on an omnibus.

"Why shouldn't I go? I can stick myself somewhere out of sight. I wonder how many out of our Eleven I know?"

He counted them on his fingers. He wanted to see and yet not be seen.

Just as he was getting off the seat he had occupied by the driver's side, a carriage passed by. Lord Launton was in it, with the countess and two other ladies.

Frank saw the danger he should run of seeing a number of old and inquisitive acquaintances.

He hesitated a moment in the dusty road.

"No; it's nothing to me. I've no interest in it now. I won't go in. Besides, it's half-a-crown, I think."

He took the footway, and set his face towards Regent's Park.

He had not walked a dozen steps when an immense hand and arm were linked in his. He felt a friendly pull towards some great figure; and, looking up, was astonished beyond measure to see himself arm-in-arm with his cousin Dick Mortiboy.

"Frank, old man!" cried Dick, crushing Frank's hand in his cordial grasp, "I would have given fifty pounds to find you, and here you are. I saw you getting off the bus."

Frank was surprised and a little annoyed.

"After all, I've got no quarrel with Dick," he thought; and his face cleared, and he returned his cousin's salute.

Dick Mortiboy was accompanied by a thin, pale-faced man, slight and foreign-looking.

"Lafleur—my cousin Frank," said Dick, introducing him.

"Fool of an Englishman," thought Lafleur, staring at Frank's bright, handsome face. "I leave you with your cousin. The cricket is not a game I care to waste time over," said he softly. "We shall meet to-morrow, Dick. You will let me go now."

"To-morrow, at eleven. My old partner, Frank. Many is the jovial day we have had together."

"I don't like his looks."

"Insular prejudice, my cousin. Why have you never sent me your address, as you promised? Do you not know what has happened? The governor has got a stroke, and I've got all the money. We've all been trying to find you out. And here you are. I sha'n't let you go again in a hurry, I promise you."

He looked Frank up and down.

"Dressed fit for Broadway. Come on in."

Dick paid for two at the gate, and they were on the ground.

Dick watched the match with great earnestness. He was a splendid hand at games of skill himself. He knew nobody, nobody knew him. But his height, his splendid beard and brown face, and his careless dress, attracted observation. He

only wanted people to bet with him on the match to make him happy.

Frank saw lots of old friends.

They asked him his address.

"Only in town for a few days," he said, with an airy laugh.

At length Dick got tired of it.

"Come on, old man. I've had enough, if you have. Let's go."

At the gates, as they went out, stood a man who had been Frank's greatest friend at college. They had rowed together, driven to Newgate together, got plucked together, written to each other until the smash came.

"Frank, by gad!" cried the man, running down the steps. "Shake hands, old fellow. And how are you? And what are you doing? Tell me you've got over your troubles. I heard all about it."

It was like a burst of sunshine, after the wretched time of the last few months, to find men who were glad to shake hands with him.

Frank tried to laugh; but his mirth was rather a hollow thing.

"I'm well, you see, Evelyn. That is, I'm not starving yet. But there's no money, and I'm still in a parenthetical stage of life."

"You know my address, Frank—give me yours. Let me help you, for old times' sake."

"Thank you, my dear Evelyn. It's like you to make the offer. Good-by. I'll give you an address—when I've got one."

He left him, and walked quickly away on Dick's arm. He could not bear to let anybody help him with money. And yet Evelyn was longing to give his old friend help.

What is there in this word money, that I may neither give it nor take it? Why should I be degraded if a man slips a sovereign in my hand? Sovereigns are not plentiful. I should like the money. I am not degraded if a man leaves me a legacy of many sovereigns.

"Come," said Dick Mortiboy to Frank, when they had got out of their Hansom in Piccadilly, "you are not engaged to-night. Come and dine with me. After dinner we will talk. I hate talking before. Let us have a game at billiards first."

He led the way to a public room near Jermyn Street. There were two or three men idly knocking the balls about. Dick took up a cue and made a stroke, missing it.

"Will you play fifty or a hundred up Frank?"

"I play very badly. I am quite out of practice."

"Well, let it be fifty then," said Dick.

The room was one of bad repute. It was frequented by sharpers. There were three in the room, of course perfect strangers to one another.

Dick Mortiboy didn't know the character of the room he was in, and didn't care. He could give an account of himself anywhere. For his part, Frank had not played a game at billiards since he left Market Basing.

He was not amusement for Dick, for he played like a man wholly out of practice.

The gentlemen in the room became interested in the first fifty up between Dick and Frank, and one bet another a wager of half-a-crown on the result.

Dick won, and the loser offered to bet again, if the tall gentleman gave the other points. Dick did give points. The man — whom the marker called "Captain" — then offered to bet Dick Mortiboy half-a-crown his friend beat him. Dick took the bet, won it, and pocketed the half-crown. He was going to play another game with Frank, but was stopped by the marker.

"This is a public table, sir. Two fifty games, or one hundred, between the same players; then another gentleman has the table, if he likes to take it."

Dick was a little annoyed, but gave way.

"Should you like to play a game, sir?" said the marker to the man he had called captain.

The fellow was a seedy swell, in clothes that had been fast twelve months ago, but now were well worn. His hat and boots showed signs of poverty.

"I should: but I don't wish to prevent these gentlemen from playing, I'm sure. I'll give way; but, really, I can't stay many minutes."

"Well, perhaps the gentleman that won will play a game with you, if you don't mind playing the winner?" the marker said.

"All right," said Dick, and pulled off his coat.

The captain played badly: so did Dick.

Both were playing dark.

"Twenty all" was called.

"Shall we have a crown on, sir, to 'liven the game?" said the stranger.

"I'll back myself for a sovereign," said Dick.

"I don't often play for a sovereign a game," said the captain; "but I don't mind doing it for once."

When Spot (the stranger) was forty, Plain (Dick) was only thirty-five.

"Make it a hundred up, sir, and have another sov on," said Spot.

"Done," said Plain.

Dick had bets, too, with the other two strangers and the marker.

At the end of the game, he had four pounds five shillings to pay.

Frank spoke his suspicions, in a low tone, before this game was finished.

Dick only nodded: he had seen they were common sharpers from the moment he entered the room.

"I'll let them have it," he said.

They played another game, Frank watching Dick's play. Up to the time the marker cried, "Sixty — seventy-two," Dick was behind generally about a dozen. His bets amounted to nearly twenty pounds with the three men.

Up to sixty he had played in a slovenly manner. At that point he took up his cue, and scored out in two breaks.

His play was superb. He was within a few points in a hundred of the best professional form. One of the men was going to leave the room. Dick called him back, and promised to finish the game in three minutes, and did it.

He asked the captain if he would like another game?

"Not with a professional sharp. Though who you are, I don't know."

"You'll pay up then, gentlemen?" asked Dick.

One of the other men whispered the captain.

"My friend suggests that it would be well if you were to give your name, sir. It is not usual to see men play in your fashion. You have sharpened us, sir — sharpened us. Give us your name and address, we are not going to part."

"Now, captain," said Dick, "you've been licked, and licked easy. You may take it in fighting, or you may take it quiet. Which shall it be?"

"Come on, Tom, don't let him bustle us out of it," said the captain; "I'll take it fighting."

There were four altogether, with the marker. They made a rush on Dick. Frank, not unmindful of Eton days, took them in flank, while Dick received them in front.

They had not the ghost of a chance. It was a mere affair of fists — a sort of light skirmish, which warmed up Dick's blood, and made him rejoice once more, like a Berserker, in the battle. And, after three minutes, the four fell back, and the cousins stood with their backs against the wall, laughing.

"And now," said Dick, "open the door, Frank."

He stepped forward, seized the marker, who was foremost, by the coat-collar, and bore him swiftly to the door, the others not interfering. There was a great crash of breaking banisters. The marker had been thrown down the stairs.

"Don't let us fight with servants," said Dick; "let us have it out like gentlemen. Now then, captain, we're all ready again."

"Let us go," said the captain, with a pale face handing Dick the money. "You have sharpened and hustled us, and you want to bully us."

"You shall go when you have apologized to me captain, not before. You other two, get out."

He looked so fierce, and was undoubtedly so heavy about the fist, that the other two, taking their hats, departed swiftly, with such dignity as their wounds allowed.

"Now, captain, let us two have a little explanation. I like rooking the rooks. I go about doing it. Beg my pardon, sir, or I'll spoil your play, too, for a month of Sundays."

He seized the poor billiard-player by the collar, and shook him as if he had been a child.

"You may do what you like," said the man. "You have got every farthing I have in the world, and my little child's ill; but I'm hanged if I beg your pardon."

"Dick, Dick," said Frank, "give him back his money."

But at the sight of the man's misery, Dick's wrath had suddenly vanished.

"Poor devil!" he said. "I've had some bad times myself, mate, out in the States. Look here, here's your money, and something for the little one. And I say, captain, if you see me drawing the rooks anywhere else, don't blow on me. Good-by. Come, Frank, let us go and dine. What a good thing a scrimmage is to give one an appetite. I do like a regular British row," said Dick with a sigh; "and one so seldom gets one. Now, over the water, somebody always lets fly a Deringer or pulls out a bowie; and then the fun's spoiled. You've got a clean style, Frank, very clean and finished. I thought we were in for it when I saw the place; so I went on. I was determined you should enjoy yourself thoroughly, old boy."

They had dinner, and talked. Dick's talk was all the same thing. It said, —

"Take my money. Let me help you. Let me give. I am rich. I like to give."

Frank with a proud air put him off, and made him talk of any thing but him and his affairs.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE street, as Frank stepped into it from Dick's hotel, was alive with people; for the night was warm and fine. He bade his rich cousin good-night, in his easy pleas-

ant way, never hinting at the sore straits to which he was reduced. Dick was rather inclined to believe, indeed, from what little information he was able to elicit from Frank, that Art paid; that Frank got a living at it; at all events, he was too proud to be helped when he saw the chance of doing well without help. Now, Dick rather admired this phase of Frank's character — as who would not? Yet he resolved that, when he saw him the next day, he would compel him to disclose the state of his finances and prospects. While one cousin thought this, the other hesitated a moment in front of the hotel, remembering suddenly that he had no bed to go to. It was a curious sensation, the most novel he had ever experienced. No bed. Nowhere to go to. No money, or next to none, in his pocket. Nothing at all resembling a home. Even a portable tent, or a Rob Roy canoe, would have been something. He shook himself all over, like a dog. Then he laughed, for he had had a capital day and a good dinner, and he was only five and twenty.

"Hang it," he said, "a night in the open won't kill one, I suppose. Dick Mortiboy must have had many in his travelling days."

Then he lit a cigar. Dick had forced a dozen upon him, which, with that curious feeling that permits a man to take any thing except money from another, Frank accepted with real gratitude. With his hands in his pockets, and his hat well back on his head, as all Eton boys wear it, he strolled westward, turning things over in his mind in that resignedly amused frame of mind which comes upon the most unhappy wight after a bottle and a half of claret. Our ancestors, in their kindly brutality, permitted condemned criminals to have a long drink on the way to Tyburn. The punch-bowl was brought out somewhere near the site of the Marble Arch; and the *condamné*, fortified and brightened up by the drink, ascended the ladder with a jaunty air, and kicked off his shoes before an admiring populace, — just as well, it seems to me, as keeping the poor wretch low, and making him feel all his misery up to the very last. Frank, having had his bowl of punch, was about to embark upon that wild and hopeless voyage of despair, which consists in sailing from port to port, looking for employment and finding none. There are certain ships to be met with in the different havens of the world, which are from time to time to be found putting in, "seeking." They never find. From Valparaiso they go to Rio; from Pernambuco to Port Louis; from Calcutta to Kingston; from Havana to Shanghai. They are always roving about the ocean,

always "seeking," and always in ballast. Who are their owners; how the grizzled old skipper keeps his crew together; how they pay for the pickled pork and rum in which they delight; how they have credit for repairs to rigging and sails; how the ship is docked and scraped and kept afloat, — all these things are a profound mystery. After a time, as I have reason for believing, they disappear; but this must be when there is no longer any credit possible, and all the ports in the world are closed to them. Probably at this juncture the skipper calls together his men, makes the weather-beaten tars a speech, tells them that their long and happy voyages must now terminate, because there is no more pickled pork and no more rum, and discloses to them a long-hidden secret. They cheer feebly, set the sails once more, turn her head due North, and steer away to that warm, windless, iceless ocean at the North Pole, where all vagrom ships betake themselves at last, and live together in peace and harmony far from the storms of the world.

Which things are an allegory. Ships are but as men. The North Pole ocean is as that hidden deep where dwell the men who have "gone under." They "go under" every day, falling off at each reverse more and more from the paths of honesty. One of them called on me a week ago. I had met him once, and only once, at Oxford, years since. He shook hands with me as with his oldest and best friend; he sat down; he drank my sherry; he called me old fellow; and presently, when he thought my heart was open to the soft influence of pity, he told me his tale, and — borrowed thirty shillings. He went away. Of course, I found that his tale was all a lie. He is welcome to his thirty shillings, with which I have earned the right of shutting my door in the face of a man who has gone under.

Was Frank thinking of all this as he walked through the squares that clear, bright night, among the houses lit up for balls, and the carriages bearing their precious treasures of dainty women? I know not. The thoughts of a man who has but six and sixpence in his pocket, and no bed to go to, are like a child's. They are long, long thoughts. If it is cold and rainy, if he is hungry or ill, he despairs and blasphemes. If it is bright and warm, if he is well-fed and young, he laughs and sings, with a secret, half-felt sinking of the heart, and a looking forward to evil times close at hand.

Along the squares, outside the great houses where the rich, and therefore happy, were dancing and feasting, thinking little enough (why should they?) about the

poor, and therefore miserable, outside, beggars came up to Frank. One old man, who looked as if he had been a gentleman, stood in front of him suddenly.

"Give me something," he said, bringing his clenched fists down at his sides in a gesture of despair. "Give me something. I am desperately poor."

Frank put a sixpence into his hand and passed on.

"Only six shillings left now," he thought.

Women — those dreadful women, all alike, who belong to certain districts of London, and appear only late at night — begged of him. These women apparently form a class peculiar to themselves. They are neither old nor young. They carry a baby. They are dressed in rusty black. They bear in one hand three boxes of cigar lights. They address you as "good gentleman," and claim to have six starving babies at home, and nothing to put in their mouths. Then the boys with cigar lights ran after him; and then more sturdy beggars, more women, and more boys.

He walked on. It struck ten. Frank's cigar was finished. Just then he passed — it was in one of those dingy, characterless streets, near the great squares — a low-browed, retiring-looking public house. From its doors issued the refrain of a song, the clinking of glasses, and stamping of feet. Frank stopped.

"I've got exactly six shillings," he said. "I may surely have a glass of beer out of that."

He went in and drank his glass. As he drank it, another song, horribly sung, began in the room behind the bar.

"Like to go in, sir?" asked the barmaid. "It's quite full. We hold it every Monday evening."

Frank thought he might as well sit down, and see what was going on, particularly as there appeared to be no charge for admission.

It was a long, low room at the back, filled with about thirty men, chiefly petty tradesmen of the neighborhood. Every man was smoking a long clay pipe, and had a tumbler before him. Every man was perfectly sober, and wore an air of solemnity exceedingly comic. One of the men — the most solemn and the most comic — occupied the chair. By his right stood a piano, where a pale-faced boy of eighteen or so was playing accompaniments to the songs. A gentleman with a red face and white hair was sitting well back in his chair, holding his pipe straight out before him, chanting with tremendous emphasis and some difficulty, because he was short of breath. This, and not an imperfect

education, caused him to accentuate his aspirates more strongly than was actually required :—

"Ho! the ma-hades of me-berry Hengle-land,
How be-hew-ti-ful hare they!"

Somewhat apart from the rest, not at the table—as if he did not belong to them—sat a man of entirely different appearance. He was gorgeously attired in a brown velvet coat and white waistcoat, with a great profusion of gold chain and studs. He was about five and forty years of age. His features were highly Jewish, the full lips and large nose of that Semitic race. His hair, thick and black, lay in massive rolls on an enormous great head—the biggest head, Frank thought, that he had ever seen. In his hand, big in proportion, was a tumbler of iced soda and brandy. He was smoking a cigar, and beating time impatiently on the arm of his chair.

Frank sat modestly beside him, and ordered another glass of beer.

"Know this place, sir?" asked the man with the big head, turning to him.

"Never saw it before," said Frank.

"No more did I. Queer crib, isn't it? I turned in by accident, because I was thirsty. They'll ask you to sing directly. Do, if you can."

The "Maids of Merry England" died away in the last bars which those who were behind time added to the original melody; and the chairman, taking up his tumbler, bowed to the singer, and said solemnly,—

"Mr. Pipkin, sir, your health and song."

The company all did the same. Mr. Pipkin wiped his brow, and took a long pull at his gin and water.

"Now," said the chairman persuasively, "who is going to oblige the company with the next song?"

Dead silence.

"Perhaps one of the visitors"—here he looked at Frank—will oblige us?"

"If you can sing, do," growled Bighead.

"Really," said Frank, "I am afraid I hardly know any song that would please; but, if you like, I will sing a little thing I made myself once, words and music too."

"Hear, hear!" said the chair. "Silence, if you please, gentlemen, for the gentleman's song. Gentlemen, the gentleman wrote it himself."

Frank took the place of the pale-cheeked musician, and played his prelude. He was going to sing a song which he made at Cambridge, and used to sing at wines and suppers.

"It's only a very little thing," he said, addressing the audience generally. "If you don't like it, pray stop me at the first verse. It never had a name."

"There was Kate, with an eye like a hawk;
There was Blanche, with an eye like a fawn;
There was Fanny, as fresh as the rose on its stalk;

And Annie, as bright as the dawn.

There were Polly, and Dolly, and Jessie, and Rose,

They were fair, they were dark, they were short, they were tall;

I changed like a weathercock when the wind blows,

For I loved them all—and I loved them all.

"Like the showers and sunshine of spring,

The quarrels and kisses I had;

Like a forest-bird hedaling trying its wing,

Is the flight of the heart of a lad.

O Annie and Fanny, and Jessie and Kate,

How love vows perish, and promises fall!

You were all pledged to me, and I wasn't your fate;

But I loved you all—and I loved you all.

"'Twas Annie I kissed in the wood,

And Fanny kissed me in the lane;

But Rowie held out, as a young maiden should,

Till she found I'd not ask her again.

Now they're married, and mothers, and all,

And 'tis Lucy clings close to my breast;

And we never tell her, what we never recall—

For I love my wife—how I loved the rest."

"Bravo!" growled the man with the big head. "Bravo! young fellow. Devilish well sung."

"Sir," said the chairman, "your health and song."

"Don't get up," said Bighead; "sing another. Look here, sing that. Mr. Chairman, the gentleman's going to sing another song."

It was "Adelaide," that supreme tenor song—the song of songs—that the man handed to Frank. He took it from a portfolio which was standing beside him.

"Yes," he said, nodding, "I'm a sort of professional, and I know a good voice when I hear it. Can you play the accompaniment? If not, I will."

Frank yielded him the seat, and took the music. Yes, he could sing "Adelaide." But how long since he sang it last! And—ah me!—in what altered circumstances!

But he sang. With all the sweetness and power of his voice he filled the room, laden with the air of so many pipes and reeking tumblers, with the yearnings of passion, which have never found such utterance as in this great song. The honest folk behind their pipes sat in amazement, half comprehending, but only half. The barmaid crept from behind the counter to the door, and listened: when the song was finished, she went back with tears in her eyes, and a throbbing heart. She was not too old to feel the yearning after love. The pale-faced young musician listened till his cheeks glowed and his eyes brightened: the poor boy had dreams beyond his miserable surroundings. The player—the big-headed man—as he played, wagged his head, and shook his curls, and let the

tears roll down his great big nose, and, drop upon the keys. For Frank, forgetting where he was, and remembering his love, and how he sang that last song to her, poured out his heart into the notes, and sang as one inspired.

"Come with me," said Bighead, seizing him by the arm as soon as he had finished. "Come away. Let us talk, you and I — let us talk."

He dragged him into the street. The clocks were striking twelve.

"Which is your way?"

"Which is yours?" said Frank.

The man moved his fat forefinger slowly round his head in a complete circle.

"All ways," he said. "Let me walk part of your way."

Frank turned to the left. It mattered nothing.

"Are you rich? — you are a gentleman, I see — but are you rich, happy, satisfied, contented, money in your pocket, money in the bank, therefore virtuous and respected?"

"No, I am none of these things."

"Then make yourself all these. Sing for money. Go on the stage. Good God, man! Giuglini himself had not so sweet a voice. Give me your name and address." Frank hesitated. "Well, then, take mine." He gave him a card. "Will you come and see me? That can do you no harm, you know. Come."

"Candidly," said Frank, "I am looking for employment; but I would rather not sing for money."

"Rubbish! I've done it. I've sung second basso at the Italian Opera. Not sing for money! Why not? You'd write for money, I suppose? You'd paint for money? Why not sing? Now, come and pay me a visit, and talk it over."

"I must look about first. Are you really serious?"

"Quite. I don't care how it is you've got into a hole — whether it's money, or what it is. On the boards, nobody cares much."

"You are quite welcome to know every thing, so far as I am concerned," said Frank proudly.

"So much the better. Then no offence. When will you come?"

"I will look for occupation to-morrow. If I don't get it, I will call on you in the afternoon."

"To-morrow. Good. Of course you won't get any thing to do. How should you? Nobody ever gets any thing to do. Good-night, my dear sir. For Heaven's sake, take care of your throat. Do wrap it up. Let me lend you a wrapper."

He took a clean red silk handkerchief out of his pocket, unfolded it, and wrapped it round Frank's throat, tenderly and softly. In the eyes of the big-headed man, Frank's voice was a fortune.

"Good heavens! if any thing were to happen to an organ like that from exposure! Are you going to smoke again? Then take one of my cigars — they must be better than yours."

"Mine are good enough, I think," said Frank, laughing, offering him one.

"Let me look — let me look. Yes, they are very fair. Don't smoke too much. And — and" — here he held out his hand — "Good-by. Good-by. Mind you come to see me. For Heaven's sake, take care."

He strode away, leaving his red silk handkerchief round Frank's neck; and presently Frank heard him hail a Hansom in stentorian tones, and drive off. Then he was left alone, began to feel a little cold, as if the weather had suddenly changed.

CHAPTER XXVI.

HALF-PAST twelve. The air of the streets is close and stifling. The Mall, St. James's Park, is still crowded. No wonder: for the air of the park is fresh, and the moonlight lies soft and bright on the trees. Frank slowly descends the steps at the Duke of York's Column, and proceeds to search for a resting-place. All the seats — he counted them as he went along, forty — appear to be full, some of them occupied by men stretched at full length, others by women sitting two and three together. All the way to Buckingham Palace there is not a single chance even of sitting room.

"Very odd," said Frank, returning, "that the same idea should strike all these people as well as myself. What is to be done next?"

The problem was solved itself as he came to the next seat, where a man was lying at full length. He suddenly rolled round, and came with a heavy thud on the gravel. Picking himself up, he staggered to where Frank was standing.

"I shay, old f'r — don't take that place, be-because it's going round."

Then he disappeared.

Frank sat down, and, stretching his legs on the wood, pulled his hat over his eyes, and tried to go to sleep.

It was of no use. Just as he was dropping off, a cab would come by. People talked as they walked past. A breath of the night air touched his cheek, and reminded him that he was not in bed. Besides, the bench was as hard as a third-class

railway carriage. Even to an old campaigner, wood makes a poor substitute for a spring mattress.

"Hang these knots," said Frank, as the clock struck one. "I had no idea that knots were so much harder than common wood."

He shifted his position, and tried to persuade himself that he was getting sleepy.

"Adversity," he murmured, "makes one acquainted with strange beds. The advantage of the situation is, one is not afraid of fleas."

A caterpillar fell upon his nose.

He sat up in disgust.

"Alternative. We may have caterpillars if we lie under a tree, or we may be watered by the fresh dew from heaven if we take a bench outside a tree. What shall we do? Let us consider."

He lay back, and fell asleep.

Five minutes after he lost consciousness, he was awakened by something touching his feet. He started up from a dream of soft couches.

"I beg a thousand pardons," said a soft voice. "I thought there was room for two."

The speaker, as the half light of a summer night, not to speak of the gas, showed him, was a tall and rather handsome man of thirty or so, dressed in a frock coat. Frank noticed at once that the heels of his boots, as the lamp shone on them, were worn to the stumps. Further investigation showed that there were no signs of collar or shirt, and that his hat as he took it off with a polite wave, was limp at the brim. By daylight, what appeared now as glossiness would have shown as grease; but this it was impossible to tell by the moonlight.

"I dare say there's room for two," said Frank, "if we economize legs."

The stranger gravely took his place, and they divided the space so as to admit of four legs, all rather longer than the average.

"Do you a — often — use this place?" inquired the stranger.

"No," said Frank, with a laugh, half in bitterness. "This is the first time that I have tried the hotel. Perhaps it will not be the last. I find it draughty — exposed, perhaps, in situation. No doubt, extremely healthy."

"Ah!" said the other, with a ready sympathy. "You have, however, let me assure you, the very best bench, for a warm night, in the whole park. Are you sleepy, sir?"

"Not very. Who the devil can sleep here?"

"When you are used to it, it is really not bad for two or three months in the year.

If I only had some tobacco, I should be quite comfortable."

"Take a cigar. I've got a few left."

He pulled out his case, and handed it to his newly-made acquaintance.

"A thousand thanks. When I was in the 4th Buffs — you've heard of that regiment? — I used to buy my cigars at Hudson's. I've got to smoke shag now, and can't always get that. A capital cigar. I'm *very* much obliged to you, sir — very — much — obliged — indeed. A very good cigar. If you were to keep them for a year in tea, you would find them ripen better, perhaps. But a very good cigar. I suppose you are — hard up?"

"Yes. Most of the visitors at this caravanserai are, I presume."

"In the service?"

"No."

"Ah! Excuse my impertinence. Well, I had my fling, and here I am. What does it matter to a philosopher?"

A slouching figure came by, apparently clad in the cast-off rags of some field scarecrow. He stopped before Frank's new friend.

"Night, major."

"Good-night to you, Jacob," said the other, with a patronizing air. "Things been going pretty well to-day?"

"No, damn bad. Here's your sixpence, major."

He handed over the amount in coppers, lay down on the gravel, with his head on his arm, and in a moment was sound asleep, and snoring heavily.

"A humble retainer of mine," said the major. "A follower, rather than a servant. Poor, as you see, but faithful. He does odd jobs for me, and I keep him going. Not a gentleman, you observe."

Frank laughed silently.

"It's a glorious thing, a good fling," said the major. "Though it's ten years since I had mine, and it only lasted two years, I remember every day of it. You remember Kitty Nelaton, of the Adelphi?"

"No. Never had the pleasure of her acquaintance."

"A splendid woman. That, of course, was allowed. I took her, sir, from the Duke of Brentwood. His grace nearly went mad with rage. Ah, I think I see myself now, tooling down to Richmond the loveliest pair of grays, I suppose, that ever were seen. But she was so devilish expensive. And I had a good year, too: got on the right thing for the Derby, landed at Ascot and Goodwood, and didn't do badly at Newmarket. Shall I tell you the story of my misfortunes?"

"Do," said Frank, "if it will not bore you."

"Not at all. It's a pleasure to talk to a gentleman; and besides, this is a capital cigar. It's ten years ago. Some of the other men have gone to grief too; so that I'm not without companions. We meet sometimes, and have a talk over old times. Odd thing life is. If I could put all my experience in a book, sir, by gad, you'd be astonished. The revelations I could make about paper, for instance; the little transactions in horse-flesh — eh? and other kinds of" —

"I beg your pardon," said Frank, who had dropped off to sleep, and was awakened by his head nearly nodding him off the bench. "You were saying" —

"Let me begin at the beginning," said the major, sucking his cigar, and beginning his story with the relish that "unfortunate" men always manifest in relating their misadventures. "I was the second son of a Norfolk baronet. Of course, as the second son, I had not much to look for from the family estate. However, I entered the army, and at once became — I may say, deservedly — the most popular man in the regiment. This was owing partly, perhaps, to my personal good looks, partly to a certain superiority of breeding which my family was ever remarkable for. Then, I was the best actor, the best billiard-player, the best cricketer, the smartest officer in the whole garrison. This naturally led to certain successes which it would be sham modesty, at this lapse of time, to ignore. Do you not think so?"

"Hump — gr — umph," was Frank's reply.

He was sound asleep, and the rest of the major's revelations were consequently not wanted. From the thrilling interest of the commencement; it may be conjectured that no greater misfortune could happen to the British public than Frank's collapse. But he was a very unlucky man at this juncture of his fortunes.

He slept two or three hours. He was awakened by a pressure at the chest.

He started up, and just had time to grip the wrist of the respectable Mr. Jacob as that worthy was abstracting his watch and chain. Frank was strong as well as young. Jacob was neither young nor strong. Consequently, in less time than it takes to write this line, the watch and chain were back in their owner's pocket, and the luckless Jacob was despatched with many kicks and a little strong language.

The major was gone.

Frank rubbed his eyes, and sat down again. It was past four, broad daylight, and the sun had risen, as the gilded clock-tower plainly showed.

"Where's the major?" thought Frank. "Did I dream? Was there a major, or

was it a nightmare? He began to tell me a story about somebody — Kitty somebody. I wonder if the six shillings are safe? Yes — here they are. What the deuce am I to do now?"

A lovely morning: a sweet, delicious air. London fresh and bright, as if night had cleaned it and swept it.

He got up, refreshed by his light sleep, and strolled down the silent avenue. On his right lay the sleepers upon the benches; poor bundles of rags, mostly; here and there, a woman with a baby: sometimes a girl, pale-faced, emaciated — perhaps a poor shirtmaker, starving in spite of virtue, because virtue, though it brings its own reward, does not always suffer that reward to take the form of a negotiable currency; sometimes a poor creature with cheeks that had once been fair, and had lately been painted, because vice though it sometimes brings sacks full of money with it, has a trick of running away with all of it in surprising and unexpected ways.

Frank stopped, and looked at one of them. She half opened her eyes. He listened. She murmured, "I sha'n't move on," and then went to sleep again. A few poor remains of finery were on her; a few tags of ribbon; a displaced chignon; a bonnet that had once been flaunting; little brodequins that had once been neat and pretty; a silk dress that had once not been discolored and bespattered with street mud. Frank was touched with pity. He stooped over her, and spoke to her. She awoke, started up, and smiled — a horrid, ghastly smile, the memory of which haunted him afterwards.

"Why do you sleep here?" he asked, a foolish question, because there could be only one reason.

"Because I've got no money."

"What do you do in the day?"

"I hide. I come out at night, like the bats." She laughed discordantly. "Give me something, if you have any thing."

"I've got six shillings. There are two for you."

"You're a good sort."

She pulled herself together, and got off the seat yawning.

"You had better finish your sleep."

"I have finished. I'm too hungry to sleep any longer. Now I shall go and buy something to eat. I must wake up my sister first, though."

She went and shook a figure in black stuff, without a chignon, who lay on the next bench. A woman about thirty — pale, thin, uncomely, long-suffering.

"Yes," said the first woman, "you see us both. Tilly was the good one. I'm the bad one. Good or bad, it makes no differ-

succ. We've got to starve all the same."

Frank shuddered. Is there nothing, then, in virtue? Can nothing ward off the evils of fate? Is there no power in self-denial, in bitter privation, to change remorseless circumstances, to stave off the miseries allotted by *ἀνάγκη*?

"Good or bad," she repeated, "it's all the same. Just as I told her ten years ago, when I was Kitty Nelaton, and she" —

"Good heavens! Am I dreaming?" said Frank, putting his hand to his head.

"Yes, Kitty Nelaton, of the Adelphi; and she was Tilly Jones the shirtmaker. And here we are, you see. Come Tilly, my dear."

"Stop," said Frank. "I've got four shillings more. Take two of them. I've got a watch and chain that I shall pawn by and by. Don't say there's no difference between good and bad. Don't, for God's sake, Kitty!"

Tears stood in his eyes.

"I told you so," said the other woman, in a dull, pathetic way. "I always told you so."

The enthusiasm of virtue had long since been crushed out of her by dire penury; but now that nothing else was possible, the habit of preaching virtue remained; and, like many preachers, who have small faith or none in their own creeds, she went on in the same old strain, repeating dead words to lifeless ears.

But they took the money, and went away. Frank noticed they crawled like a pair of old women. But the elder to appearance, the younger in reality by five or six years, was the poor worn-out shirtmaker.

"Let me get out of this place," said Frank. "I should go mad if I came here another night."

It was at the time when the Embankment was building but not quite finished. Frank went down to the grand old river, which was at high tide, and saw — in the clear, bright air of early dawn, when the black pall of smoke over London lifts and is driven away, only to come back again when men rise from their beds — the towers and spires of the mighty city standing out against the blue sky of the morning.

He communed with himself. In that bright air it was impossible to feel unhappy. At the age of five and twenty, it is impossible not to see hope in every thing. Besides, there was literally nothing that he could reproach himself with. His life had been blameless. If we are to go by sins, Frank had none, — I speak as a layman; if we are to go by aims and hopes, Frank's

were pure and lofty, — I speak as a layman. If to desire only what is good and right be in itself good and right, then was Frank, at this moment, one of the best of God's creatures. Perhaps I speak as a fool; but, indeed, I think he was. To few is it given to be so single-hearted and so pure. One sorrow he had, and one hope. That his father's name should be tarnished, was his sorrow; to wipe out the stain, and at the same time win his love, was his hope.

But how?

He thought of the man with the big head, who wanted to employ him. This was clearly not the way to get large sums of money, or a great name. But yet — not yet. Two shillings in money — now that Kitty and Tilly were provided with the means of getting through the day — was all that he had in his pocket. Besides this, a silver watch and chain, which might together fetch five pounds at a pawnbroker's.

It struck six.

"I'm hungry," said Frank, "and I'm dirty. Both are disagreeable things."

He left the Embankment, went up into the Strand, and had a cup of coffee and a piece of bread — giving twopence to the waiter, like a good Samaritan. The waiter had never had so much money presented to him, in the way of his calling, in all his life before. But instead of showing gratitude, he ran away to an inner apartment, for fear it might be a mistake.

Then he went to the old Roman bath, where he had a plunge in the coldest water in the world, south of the arctic pole, and came out glowing and strong.

It was only half-past six, so he went to the Embankment, and smoked a cigar, thinking what he should do next.

"Time goes very slowly for poor people," he reflected. "That, I suppose, is a compensation to them, because it flies so swiftly for the rich."

CHAPTER XXVII.

"PAVING-STONES come to feel hard after walking about on them for twenty-four hours or so, no doubt," Frank said to himself as he strolled along the Embankment, looking in vain for a seat. A policeman passed him. "Now, who would be a bobby?" he thought. "An awful time of it they must have. Yet I might put on the blue. I suppose I could procure a nomination. I might come down to that, and yet be — no, a gentleman drives a Hansom, or he enlists as a soldier; but no —

body ever heard of a gentleman in the police force. Officers, it is true; but even a metropolitan magistrate has never yet complimented them on their gentlemanlike demeanor in the box. Prejudices are queer things. I confess — though I haven't many of them left — I have an objection to the force. Francis Melliship you must really aim higher than the police force."

He pulled out his watch. It had stopped at half-past six. The key was at Islington. He looked up at the clock-tower. It was a quarter to nine.

"A quarter to nine. I am getting hungry again. Remarkable thing. I do not remember being hungry before 9 A.M., since I left school. My appetite is becoming serious and embarrassing. 'The wind,' as the old French proverb very prettily says, though King David and Sterne generally get the credit of it, 'is tempered to the shorn lamb.' My experience is, that his appetite does not suit itself to his circumstances. Hang it, I must have some breakfast, and as well now as in an hour's time."

He walked through the Temple into Fleet Street. In the window of a modest-looking coffee-house, an impracticable china teapot, surrounded by freshly cut chops and rashers of ham, gave notice to hungry men that breakfast was to be had within.

Frank took a seat in a box near the door, and ordered his meal; ate it with the greatest relish, and wondered if Dick Mortiboy was up, and whether he would be surprised if his cousin failed to keep his appointment with him.

Then he took up that wonderful chronicle, the advertisement sheet of the *Times*. Order in disorder, if you happen to know where to look for things. Frank did not; so he looked at every page but the right before his eyes caught the columns of Wanted and Want places. He read the list — the contents of which everybody knows perfectly well, because it never alters — with the curiosity of one interested. He was struck, of course, with that coincidence of people advertising for a place in terms that exactly suit the apparent requirements of people advertising for a person. Everybody has noticed this peculiarity, and novelists have made the most of it.

"Why don't they read this paper, apply for the vacant places, and save their money?" was his reflection.

Any number of cooks and clerks were wanted by advertisers; any number of "gentlemen," possessed of every possible qualification, advertised for employment for time, capital, or both.

There was not in the list one advertisement which seemed to fit his case. Stay,

there was one, — a secretary was wanted for an established public company. "A knowledge of the fine arts absolutely requisite. Preference will be given to a graduate of Oxford or Cambridge." Frank wrote down the address in his pocket-book. It was an agency; and Frank Melliship had neither heard nor read, nor learned from experience, that of all the humbugs in a city full of them, agencies of all sorts are the greatest humbugs. And the very cream of these swindles are agencies that rob those poor wretches who, having tried every other method of getting employment, as a last resource enter one of these spider's dens. I will give an example of their common method of procedure, which is representative. I will take a servant's agency to serve my purpose.

Here is a copy of an advertisement from the *Times*. You may see one similarly catching any day and every day: —

GENERAL SERVANT. Is a good **PLAIN COOK.** Has no objection to undertake washing. Fond of children. Age 24. From the country. Clean, active, willing, and obliging. Waits well at table. 3½ years' excellent character. Wages £9. — "Mary," Mrs. —, — Street.

This advertisement appears in the *Times*, the *Telegraph*, and the *Standard* on the same day. The advertisements cost, say fourteen shillings altogether.

Now, how many poor innocent ladies do you think apply to Mrs. — for that domestic treasure? Poor women who have large families and little means: who can only afford to keep one servant; and perhaps, ever since they were first married, have been wanting that clean, willing, country girl who will cook the dinner and nurse the children, and all well for nine pounds a year, and have never found her. How many? I should not like to say.

Do you think there ever was such a "Mary"?

Never.

Apply to the advertiser. You may write to her, or go and see her. If the latter, she will smile affably, and tell you — what she will tell you in a letter, if you write to her, that it is most unfortunate, because somebody else has just engaged that particular "Mary." On payment, however, of a fee of half a crown, your name may be placed on the books of the agency, and you will doubtless — say in a week or two — be rewarded by having just such another phoenix of domestic servants transferred to your own kitchen.

Transparent traps to catch half-crowns. The sun shines through ruses so clumsy. Very likely. But people won't see it. A proportion of the applicants — large enough to make the game at least remunerative —

pay their half-crown in the certain assurance of getting a Mary exactly like the one who was so unfortunately ravished from their grasp. Of course, they never got her. Then the fool-trap is baited afresh.

Now, multiply Mrs. —'s humble half-crown by eight. That makes a sovereign. Divide the number of applicants by any numeral you think will give you the truth as the result of this sum in simple division, and you will know how much Mr. —, who flies at higher game, gets by his profession of not finding places for secretaries, clerks, ushers, and the rest, who want employment in this great city; always remembering that his most frequent quarry is the broken man who knows neither trade nor profession, but must have a gentlemanlike occupation: men who, like young Frank Melliship, are ruined; but who, unlike, him have no friends. Hundreds of these men have given a sovereign out of their last two or three 0. to the agent, and received in return — 0.

To find these men who want work and can't get it, who deserve well, yet, asking bread, receive stones — here is a field for charity!

Now let us return to Frank Melliship.

I have not called him the hero of my story, because he has done nothing heroic; because he seems to stand in the way of his own success; and, with that noble object he has in view, to be wasting precious time only to earn an indifferent living.

Why does he not apply to John Heathcote? Why will he not be helped by his superlatively rich cousin, Dick Mortiboy?

I will tell you why, for I want to paint him as he was. It was a point of pride: determination to show his independence of all those who, as he thought, ought to have saved his father from ruin, madness, and death.

"I will do without them. The world is wide. Energy overcomes all difficulties. 'Labor omnia vincit.'"

Boys' copybook rubbish. It does not. "Res omnia vincit." It is capital that conquers all things, from a kingdom up to a woman.

"To London and to art." He had come to town something of an enthusiast. Where art left him, we have seen. Was it the fault of art? No.

He wanted long education and years of patient toil to paint even moderately well. This he did not know, and nobody but Kate had ever told him so.

Let us do him justice. He never thought himself a genius; but he believed in his energy, in his determination to succeed,

and thought some way would be found by himself. He did not want to be shown the way, or to be helped by any friend of his prosperous days. His desire to be independent, and work his own way, was a sort of vanity; but it is not uncommon. I know a rich man who would rather earn a single guinea than that the goddess of good luck should shower a hundred into his pocket from the clouds. This was Frank's state of mind too.

He had made an entry of the address of the agency in his pocket-book, and called the waiter to him; when the thought flashed across his mind that he had forgotten, when he ordered his breakfast, the emptiness of his pocket. He explained the predicament to the waiter, and offered to leave his watch with the proprietor. It was, he said, the only thing of value about him, except the guard.

The man saw he was a gentleman, and begged him not to trouble about the matter, but pay him any day when he was passing.

"It is the easiest thing in the world," thought Frank, "for a man who always has had money in his pocket, to walk into a shop and quite forget he has none."

He came to a pawnbroker's, and he thought he had better pawn his watch and chain at once. He must have some money.

There was a shop window full of plate and jewelry; in a side street was an open door-way, revealing a row of little doors. Frank guessed what these cabinets were, but he was some few minutes before he could make up his mind to go in. He looked at the costly things in the window — he walked past the doorway; at last, looking cautiously up the street and down the street as if he were about to commit a burglary, and was afraid of the policeman who might be round the corner, he plunged into one of the little boxes, falling over an old woman who was haggling with the shopman for sixpence more than she had got last time on a pair of sheets.

Frank flushed in his confusion, apologized, and tried the next cabinet. This was empty; and here, trying to look as if he had often done it before, he put down his watch and chain on the counter with the grace of a *roué*, and waited his turn.

The man examined his watch, asked if it was in going order, weighed his chain, and smiled as he leered at him through his spectacles.

Frank, despite his efforts, looked so completely innocent.

"How much?"

Frank hesitated before he answered.

"How much will you lend me?"

"Tell me how much you want?"

"Well, a fiver."

"All right. These ain't been in before, young gentleman."

"How do you know?" asked Frank, blushing, and very much ashamed of the transaction he was engaged in.

"We've got a private mark in the trade we put on every thing that comes in," said the man; and Frank believed him.

He began to write out the ticket.

"What name?"

"Must I give it?"

"Not unless you like. Any name 'll do. Mr. Smith, of Piccadilly, it generally is. Will that do?"

Frank nodded.

"Got fourpence? For the ticket, you know."

The poor boy blushed scarlet.

"All right, my lad: there you are. Four"—he dashed down the sovereigns—"nineteen, eight."

Frank put the money and the ticket in his pocket, and went back to pay for his breakfast.

Then he made his way to the agency.

The proprietor had not come, but his clerk told Frank he had a very good list of appointments "suitable for any gentleman to take."

Frank was very glad to hear this, and asked for some particulars about the secretaryship advertised.

"Our fee for entering a name is a sovereign—over a hundred and fifty a year—half a sovereign under it. This secretaryship is three hundred. Fine Arts Company (Limited). The governor's in it, and it'll soon be got up."

To the credit of Frank Melliship's common sense, I record the fact that he did not pay the sovereign, but asked the fellow what they meant by their advertisement. He had a copy of it in his book, and he read it out.

The clerk was evidently of an irritable temperament. Perhaps they often had a row in the office. He was rude to Frank. He turned on his heel, and left the counter, with the words,—

"Praps you know gentlemen as hasn't got a sovereign. Coming here, wasting our time and kicking up a row!"

The being was so contemptible to thrash, but his remark opened Frank's eyes to the position of things. That such a little cad dared insult him!

He turned into a by-street, and looked for a quiet corner where he could sit down and curse fate. There was none. So he cursed fate as he walked along.

After walking for half an hour or so, he began to pull himself together.

"Swearing will not help, at any rate. Something must be done, and that soon. I believe I am getting hungry again. What a misfortune to have such a twist. Poverty may be invigorating, but it's unpleasant. I don't think I'm strong enough to take the medicine. As for taking money from Dick, that, of course, is out of the question."

He was walking along a West-end street, and saw at a door a brass plate, with "University and Scholastic Agency" upon it.

"Let us try the schools. Perhaps they won't ask for a sovereign," he said, and went in.

They did not. The agent, a man of extremely affable and polished manners, invited Frank to sit down, and asked him what he could do.

"Tell me candidly. I've got plenty of places."

"I've taken a Poll degree at Cambridge. I know very little Latin or Greek, and no mathematics."

"Bad," said the agent. "Any French?"

"Oh, French!—of course. Any—and I can paint and draw."

"A good cricketer? Any thing of an oar?"

"Yes—rowed five in the first college boat. Played in the college eleven."

"My dear sir, a public school will be delighted to have you. They don't care, you see, about their junior masters being great scholars, because they have found out that any one can teach the boys their Delectus. But they do want athletics. You'd be worth your weight in gold to a head master. Sit down at that table, and put down all you can do. First-class Poll, I think you said."

"No—last. I just scraped through."

"Well, never mind. Sit down and write."

"So"—he read over Frank's modest list of accomplishments—"I will find—it is now July the 10th—before the vacations are over, a really good opening for you."

"But I've had no experience in teaching."

"What does that matter? Look at your experience in the field and on the river. Give me your address."

"I must find one first. I am—I am looking for lodgings; but I will send it you as soon as possible."

He came out of the office with a lightened heart. Something would be got: something unpleasant, naturally—because the order of things allots all unpleasant things to poor men—but still, the means of life. In a few minutes he was perfectly happy in his new prospects, just as a

drowning man is happy to find a plank even if he is in mid-ocean, with no ship in sight.

Then, a sudden reflection dashed his pleasure. He was to have his new post when the summer vacation was over. How was he to live till then? If on his wardrobe, there would be no possibility of presenting a respectable exterior; and his watch and chain would not go very far.

He put his hand into his empty pocket, and pulled out the card which he had taken from the Jewish gentleman the night before.

"By Jove! it's Bighead's card. I'll go and see him."

It bore the name of Mr. Emmanuel Leweson, and an address in Brunswick Square.

Thither Frank bent his steps, tired and fagged with the long walking about he had had. A cab, of course, was not to be thought of.

He sent in his card—Mr. Leweson was at home; and in a few minutes he found himself again in the presence of his acquaintance of the evening before.

Mr. Leweson looked more big-headed than ever, sitting over a late breakfast—it was half-past twelve—in a light dressing-gown. He had been breakfasting luxuriously. The table was covered with fruit and flowers. He was drinking Rhine wine from a long flask.

"Come in, Mr. Melliship—since that is your name. I am glad to see you—very glad. Take a glass of wine, and sit down. And now," he said, finishing his breakfast, and lighting a cigar, "let us talk business. Tell me as much as you like about yourself, Mr. Melliship. The more the better."

Frank told him as much as he thought advisable.

"So—no money; expensive tastes; habits of a gentleman; no special knowledge; art and music. Now, Mr. Melliship, do you know what I am?"

"No; something theatrical, I should say."

"That is because I wear a velvet coat, and breakfast off fruit and Rhine wine, I suppose? No. You are not far wrong, however. I am a musical composer by nature; the owner and manager of a London music hall by will of a malignant fate. Yes, young man, in me you see the manager of the North London Palace of Amusements."

He waved his hand as he spoke, as if deprecating the other's contempt.

"I know, I know. They sing, 'Rollicking Rams' and 'Champagne Charlie'—not a bad air, that last—and we are altogether a degraded and degrading place.

But we must pay, dear sir, we must pay. I do more than the rest of them, because I always try to get something good. For instance, I've got you."

"I don't know that you have," said Frank, laughing. The big-headed man amused him tremendously.

"You will come and sing three songs every evening, allowing yourself to be encored for one only, because time is precious. You will thus gain confidence, as well as three guineas a week. I intend to push you, and we shall have you on the boards of the Royal Italian before many years. Then you will remember with gratitude that I brought you out."

"Do I understand you to offer me?"

"Do you want pen, ink, and paper? Have I not said it? Ask the people at the music hall if Leweson's word is not as good as any other man's bond. Will you accept?"

"Don't ask me to sing under my own name."

"Sing in any name you like, only sing for me."

"Very well, then."

Mr. Leweson held out his hand, and shook Frank's by way of ratifying the bargain.

"And now come with me," he said, "and we will pay a visit to the palace. A poor place, after all; but the people go there, the idiotic, stupid people. Would you believe that I brought out the music of my opera there, and they hissed it? Then I engaged the Inexpressible Jones, placarded all London, gave them, 'Rollicking Rams' and the rest of it; and the people all came back again. Dolts, asses, idiots, loonatics!"

He banged his head with his fist at every epithet, and then put on his hat—an enormous brigand's hat—with a scowl of revenge and hatred. Then he burst out laughing, and led the way out.

They took a Hansom from the stand.

"How I wish you could do trapeze business," said Mr. Leweson. "I suppose you can't, by any chance?"

"No—I'm afraid not."

"You could act so well with Giulia. The poor girl has only got her father and little Joe to fall back on. It would tell immensely if we could put you in. The talented Silvani family. Signor Pietro Silvani, Signor Francesco, and the Divine Giulia. A brilliant idea just occurred to me—a combination of three. The Signor at the bottom, with rings instead of a bar; you on his shoulders; Giulia on yours. Giulia is left at the first trapeze; you at the second; the undaunted head of the family goes on to the last. Bless you,

Giulia wouldn't be afraid! She's afraid of nothing, that girl. But there, if you can't do it, you can't, of course. After all, it might spoil your career as a tenor. Don't let us think of it. Where do you live?"

Frank turned red.

"I'm looking for lodgings now."

"Oh! Well, then, the best thing I can do is to send you to Mrs. Skimp's. She's cheap, and tolerably good. Here we are, sir, at the palace, where every evening the British public may receive, at the ridiculous price of one shilling, the highest form of amusement compatible with their state of civilization. Here's the stage door. That is your door. I am busy to-day, and cannot give you any more time. Take my card, and show it to Mrs. Skimp. That will do for an introduction; and for the present, at least, you can stay there. And come round here to-morrow at one. Good-by. Take care of your throat."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AFTER their dinner together at Dick Mortiboy's hotel, before he bade his cousin good-night, Frank promised to breakfast with him the next day.

The morning came. Breakfast was on the table, Dick was waiting; but no Frank arrived. So as young Ready-money—as the Market Basing people began to call him—never in his life had stood on much ceremony of any kind, he ate a very substantial breakfast without his guest; felt a little vexed that the cutlets were cold: wondered where Frank was, and why he did not come; and, finally, strolled into the smoking-room, and lighted his cigar.

He had scarcely drawn a dozen whiffs of smoke, when the waiter brought up a silver tray.

"By Jove! here he is; but breakfast's done with." And without looking at the card, he said, "Show the gentleman up, and order some more breakfast."

But the card was not Frank's. It bore the name of Alcide Lafleur.

Let me say a word about Dick Mortiboy's partner.

All this time what has Alcide Lafleur been doing? What of the System, the infallible method of breaking banks, to follow up which was the primary object of the partners' return to the old country? Dick, not unmindful of his pledge, very shortly after his accession to fortune, made over to Lafleur the five thousand he had promised him. He did not consider himself so bound by the terms of that old oath

of his, which we have recorded, as to make an immediate division of his property into two halves, and to give Lafleur one; but he did consider himself bound, in a general way, to abide by him till their partnership was dissolved by mutual consent. Meantime, Lafleur seemed in no hurry to test his System: he staid in London, drawing on Dick occasionally for small sums, and keeping the five thousand intact for the Hombourg expedition. Certain small dabbings he made at écarté, hazard, loo, and such games of chance as were to be found in London circles, just to keep his hand in; but his main business was to pore over his calculations, day after day, in order to reduce his method to a mathematical certainty. Lafleur, a cool, clear-headed man, studied, as soon as he found it likely to help him, the Science of Probabilities. It helped him to the extent of furnishing him with an inexhaustible supply of figures and calculations; and it strengthened, so far as he could see, the chances of the System he had perfected.

His System was to him what his model is to an inventor. It had grown up with years of steady play and unsteady fortunes. The idea of it came into his head when Dick and he were engaged in blockade running, and used to while away their leisure hours in a little game on the after-deck, while the crew were having their little games in the fore-castle. It took root and grew slowly, taking form as it grew, till, to the inventor's eyes, it seemed absolutely perfect and consistent. No run of luck, he thought, would stand against it. With a capital of £5000, so as to meet the very worst contingencies, it was so certain to win, that he could defy fortune. He had made one or two little ventures with it in America, before they came over, with perfect success; and then, having that kind of love for it, which makes a man shrink from using his invention till the day of experiment comes, he postponed considerable operations till he could use it at the Hombourg tables. He was like an aéronaut with a new machine. He looked at it, examined it, admired it, ornamented it, and boasted of it, but put off the day of its trial, which would be either his death or his glory. Dick provided him with money for his personal expenditure, so that the five thousand remained intact. For himself, Lafleur wanted comparatively little. He was not a man of expensive tastes. He drank, but apparently without great enjoyment, and never so as to produce any effect on his head. He smoked, but in great moderation, and only light cigarettes. He loved to dress well: but this was necessary for a gentleman in his

line of life. And he liked to have the reputation of doing certain things well—with which object, he might have been seen practising with a pistol in a gallery, or fencing with a professional: this also with a view to certain contingencies.

He was so perfectly confident of his System—so thoroughly reliant on its power of breaking any bank ever started, however rich—that he did not, at this time, regard his old partner's altered position with either envy or distrust. Dick had kept his word by him honestly, as he always did—Dick's word being quite as good as any other man's oath. The money which he wanted for the System, on the possession of which he based all his calculations, was in his hands. So far, all was well. With this capital, he asked no more. Lafleur, at this time, was no vulgar and greedy adventurer, eager to get money anyhow. From this he was saved by belief in his System. All he wanted, was the means of applying it. To get the means he was, of course, prepared, as we have already seen, to do any thing, every thing. Having the means, he desired only to bring his calculations to practical uses, and, after fleecing the bankers in a perfectly legitimate way, to settle down somewhere or other, say in Paris. He had not the delight in roving and wild scenes that his partner had. No coward, he shrank from that kind of life where personal conflicts are common. This dislike to rough-and-tumble fights—common enough among Frenchmen, was atoned for by his perfect readiness to fight with pistols or sword. Dick was ready, on the other hand, with either fist or weapon. The partnership between them had been at all times true, but at no time cordial, at least, on Lafleur's part. He admired the man who feared nothing and braved every thing. He respected his pluck, his determination, his wilfulness, the way in which he forced his own way on people. What he disliked was a certain *brutalité* in his partner—a coarseness, he thought, of fibre—a want of delicacy in taste. He liked to dress carefully. Dick dressed any how—with a certain splendor when in funds. Lafleur liked to live fastidiously. Dick cared little what he ate and drank, provided the meat was in plenty, and the liquor strong, and in plenty too. A great beefsteak, and a pot of foaming stout: these represented to Lafleur his partner's tastes, to which he was himself so immensely superior. Dick, on the other hand, could not but feel some pity—a little mingled with contempt—for a man so slightly built, so singularly useless in a row. At the same time, he admired his dexterity at all games of

chance, and the calm way in which he met the strokes of fortune.

A well-matched pair, so far as each supplemented certain deficiencies in the other: an ill-matched pair, because they had no kind of sympathy with each other: a partnership of a brace of penniless adventurers, determined to live on the world as best they might: a society, which held together by the bonds of habit, of long use, and the fact that each entirely trusted in the honesty of his companion—Dick because he was loyal, Lafleur, because he was sagacious.

But now, there was a feeling growing up in both men's minds that the partnership was to come to an end, and each be free to go his own way. How the separation was to take place, which of the two was to introduce the subject, neither knew. Dick, for his part, resolved Lafleur should no longer be associated with him in the new life he was to lead, was prepared to make almost any sacrifice to break off the connection. Lafleur, on the other hand, was equally ready to go, on no conditions whatever. He had the System, and the capital to start with.

They met, therefore, when Dick went up to town, on a new footing. Men have been divided into rooks and pigeons—borrowers and lenders—sharks, and prey for sharks. But there is a third and a very important class: the class of those who defend their own. As strong as the beasts and birds of prey, they are braver, because they are backed up by law and public opinion. It was to this class that Dick Mortiboy belonged now: Lafleur, still to the camp which he had deserted. It is true that Dick half regretted the old days of excitement and peril, when they talked only to contrive new dodges, and went about to execute them. What he really missed, and would have recalled, was the wild freedom of the old life, not its antagonism to society. Conventionality, not mankind, was his enemy. This he hated, and it weighed upon him like a thick blanket on a summer's night.

Lafleur came into the room. Dick held out his hand.

His partner sat down. With the cold smile that always played about his pale face, he asked,—

"When are we going to Hombourg?"

"I don't know. I don't think I shall go at all."

"You were half engaged to go with me," said Lafleur reproachfully. "But, of course, if you cannot come—Is your cousin with you still?"

"No. I am waiting for him. You have been trying the System again?"

"Dick, it is perfect." His face had a pallid enthusiasm when he spoke of his invention. "I have studied it so long that I know every combination the chances can take. I must win. I cannot help it. I am almost sorry I had so much money from you, because I really shall not want it all. My capital is too big."

"Still—still— You know, luck may go so as no mortal capital ever held can stand against it. Remember that night when we were cleaned out at St. Louis."

"It may, of course it may. But it never does. At whist, you *may* hold thirteen trumps if you are dealing. But who ever does? No man in his senses ever contemplates a hand like that. The night at St. Louis was a bad one, I admit. It was before my System was completed, though, or else we should—No—no, we had no capital then. But I've counted every reasonable combination, Dick, every thing I ever *saw* happen, and you'll admit that I've seen a good deal. I've played countless games on paper, and I've always won. Come over with me, and see me break the banks, one after the other. By heaven! Dick, I shall be far richer than you."

"I should like to go. But, no, I think I had better not leave my own place, just now. But there, you don't understand the position of things."

"I understand," said Lafleur, "that the position of Mr. Dick Mortiboy is considerably altered for the better. I suppose—but, Dick, really I did not think you would have been so quick in throwing over old friends."

"I have thrown over no old friends. Did I not honestly redeem my word, and hand you the capital you asked for?"

"You did. That is not quite all, though. Did we not discuss the System all the way across the Atlantic? Were you not as keen as I about it? Who, but you, thought of coming over to England? Why did we come? To get out of your father this very sum—not to hand over to me, Dick, but to enable us to go away together, and break the banks in our old partnership. And now, when all is gained, you care nothing about it. Is it what I expected from you, Dick? I counted on your seeing my victories as much as on making them."

This was true. He wanted Dick's admiration and praise. He wanted to feel a man's envy.

"Because, you see," answered his partner, "a good deal more is gained than we bargained for. I no longer care to gamble. What does it mean if you care nothing about winning or losing? Upon my word, Lafleur, I would almost as soon, if it were not for the habit of the thing, dance a

waltz without any music, as play at cards without caring to win. Life, when you're rich, is quite a different sort of thing to what we experienced in the old days. It's slower, to begin with. You find that everybody is your friend, in the second place. Then you discover that instead of looking about to do good to yourself, you've got to fuss and worry about doing good to other people."

"Fancy Dick Mortiboy doing good to anybody!"

"Queer, isn't it? But true. They tell me I'm doing good, so I suppose I am. Then, after all, you can't eat and drink more than a certain amount. You don't want to have more than a dog-cart and a riding-horse. You can't be always giving dinners and things. What are you to do with your money? You've always got the missionaries left, to be sure; but you're an ass if you give them any thing."

"By Jove! I should think so, indeed!" said Lafleur.

"Then what are you to do with yourself and your money? I make a few bets, but I don't care much about it. I play a game of billiards, but it doesn't matter whether I win or lose. Life's lost its excitements, Lafleur. The old days are gone."

"In England you can always go on the turf. There is plenty of money to be lost there."

"I never cared much about horse-races, unless I was riding in them myself. I dare say I shall go on the turf, though, for a little excitement. I don't know what I shall do, Lafleur. When life becomes insupportable, I shall go across the water again, I think, and stay till I am tired of that, and want a change. But as for cards, why, what excitement is equal to that of playing for your very dinner, as we have done before now? How can one get up any pleasure in a game when it does not really signify how it ends?"

"You always think of the end; but think of the play, Dick. Think of working out your own plan, and going down with it, and fleecing everybody—eh? Is there no excitement there?"

"There would be if I wanted the money. Not now. I never cared to win from those who couldn't afford to lose, Lafleur."

"I know. You were always soft-hearted, Dick. Now, if a man plays with me, I play to win. It is his look-out whether he can afford to pay or not. I play to win. I've got no more feeling, Dick, over cards, than the green table itself."

The candor of this admission of Lafleur's was equalled by its truth.

Dick sighed, and leaned his head upon his hand.

"By Jove, they were good times, some of them. Do you remember that very day, after the St. Louis cleaning out, how we woke up in the morning without a cent between us?"

Lafleur nodded. Some reminiscences of Dick's were unpleasant. But he seemed warming back to his old tone, and Lafleur wanted to take him over to Hombourg with him.

"You went to the billiard-rooms. I went to the Monty Saloon. And when we met again in the evening, we had got six hundred dollars. That was the day when I fought the Peruvian. It was a near thing. I'll never fight a duel blind-folded again. I thought I heard his steps, and I let fly. He had it in the right arm; broke the bone. Then he fired with the left hand,—being a blood-thirsty rascal,—and hit Caesar, the black waiter, in the calf. I remember how we laughed. Then we went on to Cairo. Upon my word, Lafleur, when I think of those days, my blood boils. All fair play too. Every man trying to cheat his neighbor. Good, honest gambling, with a bowie knife ready at your neck."

"All fair play," echoed Lafleur, with the faintest smile on his lips.

"It was better than the blockade running, after all; though there were some very pretty days in that. It was better than—I say, after all, don't you think the best moment of our lives was when we stood on board the little schooner, dripping wet, after our swim from the reef of Palmito?"

At another time Lafleur would have resented this recollection of an extremely disagreeable episode in his life. Now he laughed.

"Yes," he said, "perhaps it was a moment of relief, after a *mauvais quart d'heure*. It was then that we swore our partnership."

"It was," said Dick. "We've kept to our terms ever since. Lafleur, the time has come for our separation. I can no longer lead the old life. All that is done with. We are adventurers no more. I have my fortune; you possess your capital, and—your System."

"I shall soon be as rich as you with it," said Lafleur confidently.

"We are partners no longer, then? It is dissolved, Lafleur. I've got the best of it; but don't say Dick Mortiboy ever turned his back upon a friend. If you have not money enough, let me know. Take more."

"I have plenty. I cannot fail. It is impossible. But I want you to come to Hombourg with me. See me succeed,

Dick; see me triumph with my System. That is all I ask."

"I will see," said Dick. "I will not promise to go with you. Twelve years, Lafleur, we have fought our battles side by side. I remember the words of my oath to you as well as if I spoke them yesterday: 'If I can help you, I will help you. If I have any luck, you shall have half. If I ever have any money, you shall have half.' Was it not so? Yet you have only had five thousand pounds of all my money. It is because my father's money is not mine really. I only hold it. I have it for certain purposes—I hardly know what yet. I could not keep my word in its literal sense."

"Dick, I don't ask you," said Lafleur. "I have told you I am satisfied."

"Then you give me back my word?" said Dick.

"I solemnly give it back, Dick," was the reply.

He held out his hand, which Dick grasped. He heaved a great sigh. Their partnership was dissolved. His oath had been heavy upon him; for Dick's word was sacred, the only sacred thing he knew. The vast fortune into which he had so unexpectedly fallen, with all its duties and responsibilities, which Dick was already beginning to realize, was so complicated an affair, that, in the most perfect honesty, he could not literally fulfil his promise. He did the next best thing. He gave Lafleur all he asked for. He was prepared to give him as much again—three times as much, if necessary; but he was glad to get back his word; returned to him like a paid check, or a duly honored bill.

Is it not clear that Dick is progressing in civilization? He has recognized the voice of public opinion. He has remarked that the force of circumstances compels him, whether he will or no, to lead an outwardly decorous life. He has recognized, dimly as yet, that this vast property cannot be made ducks and drakes of, flung away, spent recklessly, as he fondly promised himself when he deceived his father. He sees that it is like the root-work of some great trees, spreading out branches in all directions, small and great branches. To tear up and destroy them would be to change the fortunes of thousands, to ruin, to revolutionize, to devastate.

Things must be as they are. He is free: he has got back his word, and is clear of Lafleur.

This is a great gain.

There is still, however, one link which holds him with the past.

It is—POLLY!

CHAPTER XXIX.

Mrs. SKIMP'S. Her establishment is in Granville Square, Islington, one of those pleasant places where fashion and aristocracy have never penetrated to corrupt the simplicity of the natives. Mrs. Skimp's is two houses converted into one by knocking a door through the partition wall on each floor. Every body in the neighborhood knows it, for Mrs. Skimp has been there a good many years. Frank asked the way to Granville Square at a baker's shop: it happened to be Mrs. Skimp's baker.

"This little b'y's just going there, sir," the woman behind the counter said very civilly. "He will show you the way. What number might you want, sir?"

"Thirty-three."

"Thirty-three and thirty-four. Mrs. Skimp's, sir," said the woman, her face brightening up at the prospect of three extra loaves a week being wanted. "That's the house the little b'y's going to."

Frank followed the boy with his load of bread.

In three minutes they were in the square. It was an oblong really, and not so wide as Regent's Quadrant; and it had a badly kept strip of garden in the middle. The houses were plastered over, and, with two or three exceptions, wanted a coat of paint as badly as houses could. Mrs. Skimp's was an exception. It was a house of three stories, and attics in the roof. Over the doors were lamps slightly projecting from the pane of glass that lets light into the hall; and on these, in huge gilt figures, 33 and 34 blazed in the sun. They were repeated again on the door.

The boy pulled the area bell, and pointed to the knocker and then to Frank, when a dirty servant came out at the basement door to take in the bread.

Frank's knock remained a minute unanswered; but he saw the lace curtains of the window move, and caught sight of a face, apparently a young lady's, peeping at him over the blind.

Then the servant came and showed him into a room, evidently the dining-room.

Here he had to wait while Mrs. Skimp and her daughter "put themselves to rights."

Presently they came in together. Mrs. Skimp was tall, and of rather pleasing appearance. Her daughter was short and stout, and decidedly uninteresting.

"She takes after my lamented husband, the late Mr. Skimp," her mother often said. "She is quite unlike my family."

They both bowed very cordially to Frank. He bowed in return.

"I desire to — to" —

"Board and reside with a private family of good position. I quite understand, sir. Our circle is small and select. Terms from twenty-two-and-six, according to the room. Was it the *Telegraph* or the *Times*, sir?" asked this voluble personage.

"Neither, madam," said Frank. "Mr. Leweson recommended me to see you on the subject."

"Very kind, indeed, of Mr. Leweson. We know him quite well, my dear, do we not? A very agreeable gentleman, and quite the *artiste*. Such ears!"

Frank looked at her in surprise. He thought, at first, she alluded to the size of them, which was quite a natural, if not a polite, thing to say; but no, it was a tribute to his musical genius.

Mrs. Skimp, as the reader has already discovered, kept a cheap boarding-house. Like all of her profession, she persisted in calling it "a private family and a select circle."

She read Frank's name on Mr. Leweson's card, and showed him the bedrooms then at her disposal, expatiating in glowing terms on the advantages of living in such a neighborhood as Granville Square, and particularly with such a family as Mrs. Skimp's.

"We have the key of the square, for the use of the boarders, sir," she said.

Frank could not help contrasting, in his own mind, the key of the square offered by Mrs. Skimp, with the key of the street so lately in his possession.

There certainly is some difference between the two.

His interview with Mrs. Skimp was short and satisfactory. Anybody who came with Mr. Leweson's recommendation was received by her with great pleasure. She was about forty-five years of age, a widow with one daughter, Clara. She was born to become fat and comfortable; but nature's intentions were so far frustrated by the hard conditions of life, that, while becoming fat, she by no means looked comfortable, having an air of anxiety which came from an external effort to bring her bills within the compass of her income. She was short-winded, because the stairs, up and down which she ran all day long, had made her so. She held her hand upon her heart, not because she suffered from any palpitation, but from a habit she had contracted after her husband's death. It indicated resignation and sorrow. Her hair was already streaked with gray. Her eyes were sharp, but her mouth was soft. That meant that she would have been kind-hearted, had it not been her lot to contend with people who seemed all bent upon cheating her.

She kept a cheap boarding-house. It was a place where you received your dinner, breakfast, and bedroom for the modest sum of twenty-five shillings a week, with the usual extras, Mrs. Skimp would say, explaining that the gentlemen paid for their own liquor, of which she always kept the very best that could be got for money. They also paid extra for washing. She took Frank over the house.

"This," she said, "is the dining-room."

It was a room with two pieces of furniture in it, a table and a sideboard. The latter, a veneered piece of workmanship, in an advanced state of decay, was covered with tumblers, glasses, and bottles. Each bottle had a card tied round it, with somebody's name on it. Round the red earthenware water-bottle was tied a huge placard, on which was written, in characters an inch long, "Mr. Eddrup." Mrs. Skimp took it off with an air of annoyance, and tore it up. A dozen chairs were ranged round the walls of the apartment. There was very little besides: no pictures; dirty muslin curtains, no carpet. It was the front room, and looked out into the square, where half a dozen brown trees were making a miserable pretence of summer, and the children were tumbling over each other on the pavement outside the rails.

"Yes, sir," said Mrs. Skimp, "it is a privilege of my boarders to go into the garden if they like, and smoke their pipes there. And very beautiful it is, on a fine evening, when the flowers are out, I do assure you. Now, let me show you the billiard-room, sir."

At the back of the dining-room was a billiard-table. Old it was certainly; the baize torn and patched, and torn again; the cushions dull and lumpy; the balls untrue from their long battering; the cues mostly without their tops,—but still a billiard-table: undeniably, a billiard-table.

It is an extra, of course, said Mrs. Skimp with pride. "We charge a shilling a week for the privilege of coming into this room. Some of the gentlemen"—this with a deprecatory simper—"spend their Sunday mornings here instead of at church. But perhaps, sir, you've been better brought up."

She led the way to the drawing-room, ornamented with a round table in the middle, curtains, and two or three battered easy-chairs. In them were seated two men, smoking pipes. They looked up as Frank came in, but did not offer to remove their pipes from their mouths.

"This is the drawing-room, where the boarders sit after dinner, and play cards if they like, or amuse themselves," she whispered. "That is Cap'en Bowker, him

with the red beard, and the other is Cap'en Hamilton, him with the mustache—both boarders, sir."

Frank gave half a look at them, and followed his guide to the bedroom. He got a small room,—two of them had been made out of a big room by putting up a partition, and taking half the window,—arranged to bring his portmanteau round at once, and went away.

"We dine at half-past five, Mr. Melliship, punctual. I do hope you won't keep us waiting, because the gentlemen use such dreadful language if the meat is overdone."

"I'll be punctual, Mrs. Skimp," said Frank, as he trudged off to his old lodgings, and brought away his luggage.

Then he strolled about the delightful neighborhood of Islington—new to him—making acquaintance with the most remarkable monuments of the place; and then he found it was five o'clock, and he turned homewards to be in time for dinner.

"Not expected to dress at Skimp's, I suppose," he said.

The bell rang as he opened the dining-room door. The room was filled by about a dozen men of all ages. They greeted Frank with the stare of rude inquiry by which men of a certain class welcome a new-comer.

"Swell down on his luck," murmured Capt. Hamilton to the lad—a King's College medical student—who stood by him, leaning half out of the window.

At the moment, a red-cheeked and bare-armed servant-maid brought in the dinner. She was followed by Mrs. Skimp, who had brushed her hair, and put on a clean cap for dinner, and now assumed the head of the table, rapping with the handle of her carving-knife to summon her boarders.

They took their seats.

"You must take the bottom seat, Mr. Melliship," said the hostess, gracefully pointing with a fork. "No, not the end—that's Mr. Eddrup's. That's right: next to Cap'en Bowker. Jane, take the cover off."

Just then there glided into the room an old gentleman, dressed in black coat and gray trousers. He took his place at the end of the table. Nobody took the least notice of him, except Capt. Bowker, who asked him, in a whisper, if he was better. Mr. Eddrup shook his head, and poured out a glass of water. This was a sort of signal; for there is no better opportunity of displaying wit than when you are waiting to be served, and no safer method than that of chaffing an old man.

The medical student began. How delightful is the flow of spirits, unchecked by the ordinary restrictions of politeness, which

distinguishes a certain class of medical students!

He burst into a horse laugh, and pointed at Mr. Eddrup.

"Ha, ha!—Ho, ho! There he goes again. Must cool his coppers."

"Where did you get tight last night, Mr. Eddrup?" cried Capt. Hamilton, whom Frank set down at once as a leg of the most unmitigated description. He was one of those shady, suburban-race men who hang about at small meetings, living, Heaven knows how. At present, he was three or four weeks in debt at Skimp's, and was meditating flight, with the partial sacrifice of his wardrobe.

"I think I saw him at the Alhambra about eleven," said another, a City clerk.

"He was winking at the ballet girls."

"O Mr. Eddrup! Oh, bad man!" was groaned all round the table; and then everybody laughed.

Mr. Eddrup took not the smallest notice of anybody, calmly sitting with his eyes fixed before him. The immobility of his features was very remarkable. He took no notice at all, either by look or gesture. He was a small, thin man, with a broad, high brow. His hair, which had not fallen off, and was still thick, lay in long, white masses much longer than young men wear it, and gave him a singular, out-of-the-way appearance, not easily forgotten. But his face attracted Frank at once. It had a quite inexpressible charm of sweetness. The cheeks were pinched in; round the eyes were crows'-feet; the lips were thin; but, in the sad smile that lived upon his mouth, you could read the presence of some spirit of content which made the foolish gibes of the rest fall upon him unregarded. Who was he? Why did he live at Skimp's? Frank caught himself looking at him during the dinner with ever-increasing wonder. It must be poverty,—perhaps it was avarice. His clothes were worn and threadbare. He drank nothing but water with his dinner.

The dinner consisted of an enormous leg of mutton—the biggest ever seen, probably, and, Frank thought, perhaps the stringiest. He found that you could have beer, or even wine—only that luxury was hardly known at Mrs. Skimp's dinner-table—by ordering it of the red-armed attendant. During the intervals of feeding, a running horse-play of wit went on at Mr. Eddrup's expense. His appetite was commented on—his personal appearance and habits. Stories, not the most delicately chosen, were told about his antecedents. To all this, Mr. Eddrup was entirely callous. Capt. Hamilton greatly distinguished himself in this feast of reason by a persistent disre-

gard of a woman's presence, and a steady accumulation of insinuations against the morals of the old gentleman, which did him infinite credit.

"Does this sort of thing go on every evening?" asked Frank of his neighbor, Capt. Bowker, the only one who took no part in the conversation.

"Every morning and every evening. Breakfast and dinner. At two bells and the dog watch," replied Capt. Bowker.

Frank hardly understood the last allusion, but let it pass.

Dinner concluded as it had begun, without the ceremony of grace; and the guests rose one by one, and strolled into the billiard-room.

Capt. Hamilton and the three at the end of the table alone remained. He advanced to Frank with an easy grace, and tendered him his card.

"Let us know each other," he said, "as we are for the moment in the same hole."

Frank took the card: "Capt. Hamilton." No regiment upon it.

"Ceylon Rifles," said the captain.

"My name is Melliship," said Frank. He would not have another *alias*.

"Come and join our pool, Mr. Melliship."

"No, thank you. I never play at billiards, except—that is, I never do play."

"Come and look on. You can bet on the game, and smoke."

"I never bet, thank you," said Frank coolly.

"Well, what do you do, then?" asked the captain rudely.

"What the devil, sir, is that to you?"

The blood rushed through Frank's veins again. He was getting combative against this thinly-disguised rook.

Capt. Hamilton turned on his heel, and went away. A minute or two afterwards the click of the balls was heard, and an approving laugh at some anecdote of the gallant officer's, probably an account, from his own point of view, of his late interview with Frank.

Mr. Eddrup still sat at the end of the table, Capt. Bowker beside him. They rose together as soon as the room was cleared.

"Young man," said Capt. Bowker, "I am glad to hear that you don't bet, likewise that you don't play billiards. Come up stairs, and have a pipe in the drawing-room with me and Mr. Eddrup. We use this room pretty much to ourselves," said Capt. Bowker, taking an easy-chair. "The others prefer the billiard-room. They go out, too, a good deal in the evenings. That's a great thing at Skimp's. A man is left alone if he likes."

The speaker was a man of about fifty-five or so — weather-beaten, rugged. He had fair hair and blue eyes, and had a habit of looking straight ahead at nothing, which comes of a dreamy nature. He was an old "ship captain" — i.e. a merchant-service skipper.

It is a singular thing about skippers, that ashore they are all uniformly the most gentle, tractable creatures that walk about. They drink sometimes, which is their only vice. You may do what you like with them. A child can lead them with a thread. Afloat! Phew! Defend us from serving under the flag of a merchantman, British or Yankee. Language which belongs to the merchant-service alone, hard blows which belong peculiarly to the galleys, rough treatment, such as a Moorish prisoner used to look for, — all these you may expect from the merchant captain.

But Capt. Bowker was ashore now, and it was only from occasional hints in conversation that you got any gleams of light as to the other side of him.

Mr. Eddrup did not smoke. He sat at the window, and leaned his head on his hand.

"They're a wild set down stairs," said Capt. Bowker. "They want a little discipline."

"They are all young," said Mr. Eddrup, "all young. We pardon every thing to the young." He turned to Frank, smiling.

"I don't know," said Frank. "I should not be inclined to pardon every thing to the young. I like men of my own age — I suppose I am young — to behave with some approach to good manners, as well as to be men of honor."

"Honorable. Yes, yes. The young must be always honorable. We can pardon any thing but dishonesty. But good manners. Surely, sir, it is a very small matter."

"Well, yes; but a sufficiently important small matter, Mr. Eddrup. May I light a cigar?"

He lit and smoked one of Dick's Havanas, Capt. Bowker all the while puffing vigorously at a pipe with a long cherry stick, which held about an ounce or so of cut-up ship tobacco. No one came near them except Mrs. Skimp, who brought up tea. She gave Frank his cup, whispering in his ear as she did so, —

"It's a shilling a week extra. Only Mr. Eddrup and Cap'n Bowker has it."

Presently Mr. Eddrup got up, and stole out of the room. Frank saw him cross the square, and disappear in one of the streets on the other side.

"He always goes out at eight, every night, and comes home at eleven," said Capt. Bowker.

"What is he?"

Capt. Bowker evaded the question.

"He's great company for me. If it warn't for him, Skimp's would be as dull as my old cabin in the Doldrums. I should go to live at Poplar, where I've got chums. You never went a long sea-voyage, I suppose?"

"No longer than from Newhaven to Dieppe."

"Ah! then you've got to find out what solitude means. Be a skipper, sir, and you'll know. They look up to us, sir, and envy our position. It's natural they should." He spoke as if he was an admiral at least. "But it isn't all sailing with the sou'-west trade wind aft. Some of us drink. That's bad. Now, beyond my four or five goes of grog of a night, a pannikin or so of a morning, another about noon, and one or two after dinner, I never did drink. I'm not one of your everlasting nippers. And what's the consequence, sir? Here I am, sound in limb at fifty-five. Pensioned off by my noble firm after forty years' service, and happy for the rest of my days."

He paused, and rang the bell.

"Bring the usual, Mary, and two tumblers. You shall have a glass of my rum to-night, Mr. Melliship. What was I saying?"

"You were saying that you were going to be happy for the rest of your days. So I suppose you are going to take a wife, Capt. Bowker."

"A wife! The Lord forbid! No, sir, I did that once — fifteen years ago — once too often. Ah, well! she's dead; at least, I suppose so." He turned quite pale, and beads of perspiration stood on his forehead. "Well, let that pass. What kept me from drink was, that I had a resource which is given to few men. Do you compose, sir?"

"Compose? Music?"

"No — music — nonsense? Anybody can make music. Verses, sir, immortal verses. That's what I used to spend my time in doing when I was below in the cabin. Now here" — he pulled a folded and frayed piece of paper out of his pocket — "here is a copy I made in my last voyage home. Read it, and tell me candidly what you think of it."

Frank opened it. It began, —

"Tis fearful, when the running gear is taut,
And creaking davits yield a frail support."

"Hem! Rhyme rather halts here, doesn't it? Shall I read the rest at my leisure, Capt. Bowker?"

"No, no; no time like the present. Give me hold, young man. Now, then, stand by; here's the rum. So, sit steady, and listen."

He read his composition. Frank listened as one in a dream. What next? Tosing in a music hall, to live at Skimp's, to sit at the same table with Capt. Hamilton, to hear Capt. Bowker read his verses: this was not encouraging. He would have to go to the palace in the morning, to rehearsal. After all, it is necessary to live. At least, one would be able to pay one's way on three guineas a week.

"So, like the Doldrums' calm, his onward way
I checked who dares thy laws to disobey."

It was the termination of Capt. Bowker's poem.

Frank woke up.

"Very good indeed, Capt. Bowker. The last lines especially — very good. They remind me of Pope.

"So, like the Doldrums' calm, his calm
Is checked who dares to —"

"Not quite right," said the divine bard, with a smile. "But you are not a sailor. Shall I read it again?"

"No, don't — pray don't."

"I won't. Let us talk."

That meant, "Let me talk."

Frank lay back in his easy chair, and dreamed of Grace, and the pleasant country-side. How was he to win her; how to pay off those debts? It was not a hopeful reverie. There are times when the veil of illusion falls off. It is at best but a fog, most common in the morning of life, and extremely pretty when the sun shines upon it. It was fallen now. Frank measured the distance between himself and Grace, and saw that it was widening every day.

Capt. Bowker recalled him. He was maundering on: —

"— when I commanded the *Merry Moonshine*, in the Chinese coolie trades running to Trinidad. It was an anxious, time, because we had four hundred of them aboard, and not too much rice. They used to murder each other — ten, a dozen, or so — every night. That lessened the numbers."

"What did they do that for?"

"What do men always fight about? Then we had bad weather — terrible bad weather got on the edge of a cyclone. We had the coolies battened down 'tween decks; and what with the noise of the storm, and the cries of them wild cats, and the mainmast going by the board, I do assure you it was as much as I could do to get that poem finished. As it was, it wasn't really finished till I got home; for there was a lot more unpleasantness. We put in at Allegoey Bay; and directly the coolies caught sight of land, I'm blest if forty or

fifty didn't chuck themselves out of the ports and overboard, to swim ashore. I do not remember," he said, stroking his nose — "I do not remember hearing that any of them got there. There's sharks off that coast, you know. But think of the loss it was to me!"

CHAPTER XXX.

AFTER walking through a number of narrow and dark passages, Frank found himself at last in the North London Palace of Amusement and Aristocratic Lounge.

Dingy and dirty by daylight it appeared.

Plenty of light — to show the tawdry, gas and smoke tarnished state of decorations — came in through a lantern in the great dome roof; for the place had once been a daylight exhibition — a sort of superior Polytechnic, started at the same time as the mechanics' institutes, whither it was thought the people would eagerly flock to improve their minds. Mr. Leweson's company could therefore rehearse comfortably without the gas — except on very dark and foggy days.

The features of the building struck Frank as something familiar. His father and the flavor of Bath fluns flashed upon him; for memory mixes incongruous elements as old recollections pour upon us. He had once been taken there as a little boy, when what was now a music hall had been the Lyceum. The place had now, however, tumbled down from its high estate, and in its fall had ruined half a dozen speculators before the genius of a Leweson made it pay.

Frank looked round. It was the same place, he was sure of that; though how changed was all about him!

He remembered the great, bare hall, with half a dozen dreary electric machines; the galleries, round which geological specimens were arranged; its side wings, where were displayed such objects as ancient British pottery, specimens of early type, botanical collections, and other dry and improving things. He remembered how he had been led round, wearily yawning, with a party of girls who began by yawning too, and ended by snapping at each other. All the time there had been the buzz of a lecturer's voice, as he addressed an audience consisting of an uncle and two miserable nephews, on the more recent improvements in machinery employed in the manufacture of cotton fabrics. And he remembered how his heart lightened up when they came to a refreshment stall, and everybody had a cake.

He rubbed his eyes, and looked round. Yes, it was the same place; but where the electric machines had stood was now a stage, where the geological collection had formerly been was now a row of private boxes. The apparatus had all disappeared; only the refreshment-room remained, and this was vastly increased and improved.

"Here we are," said Mr. Leweson. "This is where the loonatics come every night to stare, and listen, and drink. Amuse yourself by looking for half an hour or so."

"I have been here before," Frank began.

"Everybody comes here; it's one of the sights of London," said Mr. Leweson, interrupting him; "and the loonatics" —

It was Frank's turn to interrupt.

"I mean years ago, when it used to be called the Lyceum. I was a boy then."

"Phyoo!" the proprietor whistled. "Ah! quite another thing. It was a Limited Liability Company. It would have smashed 'em all up instead of being smashed itself, if it hadn't been. It has been lots of things since then. Nobody made it pay, till I took it in hand. Mark me," continued Mr. Leweson, with great gravity, and in his deepest voice, —

"Well, sir."

"That'll be the end of that round place they're building at Kensington."

"What, the Albert Hall?" cried Frank.

"Yes; certain to come to it; only a question of time. Be a place just like this; and, with the Horticultural Gardens at the back to walk out into and dance in the summer, Ranelagh, Vauxhall, and Cremorne thrown into one would be nothing to it. I'd give — I'd give — there, I don't know what I wouldn't give a year for that place, with the gardens thrown in; and pay the biggest dividend that ever was paid by anything in this world before."

"But, my dear sir," Frank began shaking his head.

"Ah, you may laugh: and I may not, and I dare say I shall not, live to see it; but that is the future of those two places, as sure as eggs are eggs — take my word for it. But, there, I must leave you and attend to my business; they want me. Go anywhere you like, only not on the stage just yet; you'd be in the way. The new ballet is just coming on."

Mr. Leweson left Frank in front of the stage, and disappeared himself down a trap-door in the orchestra.

Frank took a seat in a box near the stage, and looked about him.

The scene was new to him, and, apart from the novelty, was interesting in itself.

The curtain was up. It revealed an immense stage, crowded with children, girls,

and men. The wings and drops were representations of the foliage of a forest of palms. In the background was a vast gold fan, which at night unfolded, and displayed Titania, Queen of the Fairies, reclining among her attendant sprites and fays.

In front, close to the wire fencing of the footlights, stood a little, mean table, covered with slips of manuscript. At the table sat the chief of the orchestra, making annotations on his score with a red chalk pencil, sometimes from the manuscripts, sometimes without reference to them. By the conductor's side stood an iron music-stand, three empty rush-bottomed chairs, and a fiddle in a case.

The rehearsal had not yet begun, and the girls were collected in little knots, always breaking up and re-forming; chattering together like so many grasshoppers, and laughing perpetually, at nothing at all, and just out of the irrepressible gayety of their hearts. At the sides of the proscenium were two sheets of looking-glass. These were a great source of attraction, and never idle for a second. Constantly one or two of the girls would leave the rest, and, going in front of the glass, execute a few choregic gyrations quite gravely, no one taking the least notice of them, nor they of any one else. It was quaint to see them staidly pirouetting, gyrating, and posturing before these great glasses, each one totally regardless of the rest. The private practice and self-examination before a woman's most faithful confessor accomplished, the young ladies would retire to their friends, and join in the never-ending chatter. Directly they left the mirrors, their places were seized by a lot of tiny children — girls — who in ragged dresses, mere little children of the gutter, solemnly ambled up and down in front of the glass, put out their chubby little legs, and waved their little red arms. They never tired of looking at themselves. When their elder sisters came and turned them out, they fled like wasps from a honey pot. The moment the coast was clear, back they all came, tumbling over each other in their eagerness to be in the front, and began once more the children's imitation of their elders' vanities.

Frank looked on at this lively scene with great interest. He had never seen a rehearsal before. From what he had heard of the young ladies of the ballet, he had been accustomed to regard them as melancholy victims of mistaken art, — persons who were compelled by want to sacrifice their self-respect, and go through a nightly course of public posturing for the admiration of a foolish crowd. Now he met them in flesh and blood, he found all his original ideas

knocked on the head. So far from having no self-respect, they appeared to be full of it; so far from having any sense of humiliation, they evidently delighted in their calling. Of course, it will be seen that Frank was exceedingly inexperienced. At the same time, had he been the most hardened old *roué* that ever walked behind the scenes, he could not but be struck with the natural gayety and light-heartedness of the girls. It was all real: no affectation or false semblance. They were all happy, all laughing, all chattering, all dancing, running, and capering about the stage.

The men and boys kept at the back. They were an exceedingly shady-looking lot. As it afterwards appeared, their business in the ballet was to come in and make gestures, to fill up the background, to stand in attitudes, and perform other easy and elementary parts which belong to dramatic representations.

The girls had nothing to say to them; and they, for their part, never spoke to the girls, but kept to themselves under Titania's great fan.

A little commotion among the crowd. It opened, and made a way for Mr. Leweson, the master of the ballet, and his two assistants. The three professors of the art of dancing were French; that was patent at half a glance. The same sallow, shaven cheeks, the same cropped black moustache, the same height, belonged to all. As Mrs. Partington would say, they might all three have been twins. And this natural resemblance was heightened by their all appearing in bluish pilot jackets, rather tight-fitting black trousers, and cloth boots.

Mr. Leweson signed to a pale man to open the fiddle-case, and begin.

"We've got lots of work to get through, Mr. Sauerhäring" — the master of the ballet was an Alsatian by birth — "so let us get on. I want to see that ballet of butterflies perfect this afternoon."

"M'sieur, you shall see it."

"It's a very stiff job."

"Bah! — pooh!" dissented Sauerhäring.

"It — is — noth — thing."

"Glad to hear it."

"Psha! You shall see it pairfect, while you say one, two." He looked at the fiddler. "Go on," he said.

His assistants vanished among the girls, when they were seen at intervals among the crowds of coryphées, setting good example. The fiddler struck up, and the ballet commenced. The girls were dressed in all kinds of costumes. Some had their plain walking-dresses of stuff or black silk, only with their bonnets and jackets off: some had the "bodies" of the dress — the skirts being removed — leaving them in

soiled muslins; some wore a kind of short petticoat; one or two were in what theatrical critics call page dress, but what the girls call "shapes," such as they would appear in at night. They all wore silk stockings, some of them having on a kind of red gaiters, which Frank took to be elastic, and intended to strengthen the limb. He had noticed, previous to the rehearsal, one or two artistes more conscientious than the rest engaged in diligently rubbing their ankles and circumjacent regions. At first he could not make out the reason of this manoeuvre, but was at length reminded of Lillie Bridge and professional runners. Then he knew what it was meant for.

"Go an," said the ballet-master, pronouncing the word as if he were an Irishman — "go an, lad-ees."

They went "an" in that vast hall, with one spectator — Frank — to the scraping of the solitary fiddle. It marked time; but for any thing else, a battalion of guards might as well have marched to the sounds of one penny whistle, or a cathedral choir have been accompanied by a jew's harp. They were learning the figures of the butterflies' ballet, and began the first with great vigor and energy.

But they were not right about it.

M. Sauerhäring threw out his arms, and trilled a prolonged guttural "Ah — h!"

"Bah! — pooh! — phit! — tush! — psha!" he cried in a string, and then gave a "klik," like a whole cab-rank starting in pursuit of a double fare.

The music stopped. The ladies laughed. The professor said, —

"Stupeed! this is the step."

Then he capered solemnly in front of them.

"One, two; one, two — lal-lal-la, lal-lal-la; one, two; three, four."

Behind him, a long file of coryphées imitated his movements. To Frank, Sauerhäring's limbs seemed to be of India-rubber as he shook them from side to side.

"One, two — one, two. Now, again."

The odd thing being that they never once stopped chattering to each other and laughing.

They were admirably drilled. Not one but kept her eye fixed upon her master, — that is, one eye, the other being given up to see how the other girls were getting on. It was wonderful to see them catching the combinations, and patiently working them out. As for patience, it was difficult to say whether the girls were more patient or the master more pains-taking.

Presently the chief of the orchestra crossed the stage to M. Sauerhäring. Directly the master turned to speak to him, the girls began to romp about, one after

the other darting from the ranks, and executing a pirouette on her own account in the centre of the stage, making believe to be for once a *premiere danseuse*. Then the master turned round, and order was re-established.

Presently came the children's turn. A ragged regiment they were by daylight; at night, butterflies and moths—all spangle and gauze. Now, with muddy stockings, and shoes full of holes, giving M. Sauerharing and his aides-de-camp a vast deal more trouble to teach them one figure than their elder sisters would do in learning a dozen. Their drilling lasted half an hour at least; and at least once in two minutes the indefatigable, and, as it appeared, ubiquitous Sauerharing stopped fiddle and children with his guttural, tremulant "Ah—h—h!" and reeled off the five expressions of discontent he had learned from a phrase-book of the English tongue in the paternal orchard in his own Alsace,—

"Bah!—pooh!—phit!—tush!—psa!"

To him they were a word in five syllables, and he ejaculated them to a sort of tune, as an angry vocalist might sound his "Do, re, mi, fa, sol."

Among the children, one little mite about six years attracted Frank's attention. She had been the most assiduous while she was on the stage in ambling up and down before the mirrors. Now she led off the train of children with a precision and solemnity that were most edifying, executing her simple steps most carefully and conscientiously. The moment she was free again, she ran off to the looking-glass, and practised them over again, with many curtesies and salutes, wonderful to see. That child will rise and be heard of in her profession, unless some unlucky accident cuts her off.

While this branch of the *corps de ballet* were practising figures and groupings, there came upon the scene one of the principal dancers, dressed as if for the evening, but without any flowers or jewels, just as she appears in the initial letter to this chapter. She walked across the front of the stage, regarding the lower members of the profession with that stare that sees nothing, common enough among the gentle daughters of England's aristocracy. A mere ballet-girl, a troupe of ballet-girls, what could they possibly be in the eyes of Mlle. Goldoni, from the opera house of Milan? In her hand she bore a small watering-pot, with which she sprinkled the boards in front of the looking-glass on the left, took possession of it, and proceeded to practise by herself. First, she turned round on the left toe, with the right leg a foot and a half above her head; then she performed the same manœuvre with her right toe and left

leg; then she placed her foot as high up on the gilded pillar of the proscenium as she could, and kept it there; then she began arching her feet before the glass; then she went over the whole performance again—never disturbed by the others, who took no manner of notice of her, and never herself taking the least notice of the rest;—all the while looking in the glass with a sort of curiosity, as if the legs belonged to somebody else. One or two other people, including a lady of immense proportions, in black velvet, came in, and sat on chairs in front of the stage. The little children romped round the house, and vaulted over the backs of the seats. The unhappy-looking youths, in felt hats and greasy coats, at the back, went through the semblance of what they were about to perform at night in spangles and bodden suits. The assistant ballet-masters capered and danced all over the stage. The girls went through their drill again and again. No one got tired. The melancholy fiddler, whose strains produced a profoundly saddening effect on Frank, played on with the pertinacity and monotony of an organ-grinder. The conductor of the orchestra made his notes on the music; the big lady in black velvet gazed on unweariedly; the manager, Mr. Leweson, came and went, bringing his big head upon the stage and taking it off again at intervals.

At last he came round to Frank's box with a portfolio in his hand.

"Always a lot to do with the production of a new ballet. Now let us talk while they finish the rehearsal. You see, Mr. Melliship, the loonatics who come here like a ballet: not that they care, bless you, what it's like, or what it means, so long as there's plenty of short skirts on the stage. But it must be a spectacle! Another thing the loonatics that frequent this miserable palace of humbug like is the sight of somebody running the risk of breaking their bones. So we've got a trapeze rigged up, as you see. But they must needs have a woman, so we've got the Divine Giulia—Giulia Silvani—to perform with her father. I dare say they'll be round presently. Comic songs of course they must have. We've got the Inexpressible Jones, and the Incomparable and Aristocratic Arthur De Vere. They only come at night, of course. Beautiful specimens of the aristocracy, both of them; but they go down with the loonatics."

He stopped, and began to look about in his portfolio.

He produced a manuscript.

"Now, with a singer like yourself, there are only two lines open. You must give up altogether the notion that the British loon-

atic wants music. He doesn't. He wants sentiment to make him cry, and patriotism to warm up his puny little heart. I'm ashamed of him, Mr. Melliship — I am, indeed. But what can I do? Here I am, advertising you yesterday in all the papers, and sending sandwiches up and down the streets to-day" —

"Advertising me!"

"Yes. Look here: wonder you didn't see it as you came along."

He called one of the children, and sent her for a bill. She presently returned with a flaming poster.

NORTH LONDON PALACE OF AMUSEMENT AND ARISTOCRATIC LOUNGE.

IN ADDITION TO THE GALAXY TALENT

Already engaged, the Manager has great pleasure in announcing that he has secured, for a short time only, the services of the

NEW AND GREAT ANGLO-ITALIAN TENOR,

SIGNOR CIPRIANO.

The Signor, who has never sung before in England, but who is well known to possess the finest Tenor Voice in the World, will sing

TO-NIGHT,

AND UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE,

THREE BALLADS

EVERY EVENING,

At Half-past Eight and Half-past Nine.

Across this announcement was a colored strip, with "To-right" upon it.

Frank read it with a mixed feeling of annoyance and amusement. After all, it didn't matter. His new grand name was better, at any rate, than his own — if he must appear before a British audience.

"I suppose it's all right," he said doubtfully, handing it back.

"Of course it is; but the thing is what you're to sing. Now, I asked my man" — he meant a musical understrapper who composed songs for him, words and music, at a pound a-piece — "I asked my man to knock me off a little thing in imitation of the Christy's songs of domestic pathos — you know — like 'Slam the door loudly, for mother's asleep,' 'Touch the place softly, my pretty Louise,' 'Father, come home, for mother is tight,' — charming songs, you know, with a chorus soft and whispered at the end, so as to bring the tears in the people's eyes. Now, what do you think he brought me this morning. Read that."

He looked at Frank curiously, while the latter read it and laughed.

It was a song based on one of the hum-

blest and most ordinary topics of "domestic pathos," and ran thus: —

"He will catch it from his mother,
For the widow's heart is low,
And beneath the weeping willows
Still her wayward child will go,
O'er the river course the shadows —
He has spoiled his boots and hat —
While the sunset lights the meadows,
For his mother spank the brat."

"'Vulgar and coarse'? I knew you'd say so," said the Bighead. "It's a pity too. My man told me it was written in direct imitation of the great original, with whispered chorus, and all. See what a capital effect it would have. You in the centre, head held down in attitude of listening — so; voices behind — unseen you know — 'for his mother' — 'for his mother' — 'for his mother' — dying away, with a harp obligato to follow."

"I'll sing it if you like," said Frank. "What does it matter, if the people like it?"

"Ah, we must follow the loonatics, not lead 'em as I should wish," said Mr. Leweson, sighing. "Well, well, we'll have it; though it's a shame — it's a shame to ask a man with your voice to sing such a song. Now for the second, 'The Bay of Biscay.' It will suit you well. They'll encore that; or you may sing 'The Death of Nelson.' And now to try the room."

He led the way to the stage, had a piano wheeled in, sat down, and directed Frank where to stand, giving him, at the same time, a few hints on the art of bowing to an assemblage of British loonatics.

The acoustic properties of the place were splendid. Frank felt as if he had never sung in his life before, as he heard his own voice filling the great building and echoing in the roof.

"What do you think of that?" whispered Mr. Leweson to the conductor.

"How long have you got him for?"

"Two months' agreement first. I'm going to make him sign directly."

"How much?"

"Three guineas."

"Make it six months. You won't keep him a day beyond his time."

Frank finished.

"How was that, Mr. Leweson?"

"Very good — very good. A little softer at the finish: don't be afraid they won't hear you. I'll have the chorus all right for you by the time you come this evening. Now for 'The Death of Nelson.' You may make the glasses ring if you like. Come in, Patty, my dear. Where's your father?"

This was a new-comer, a singularly pretty, modest-looking girl. He did not wait for an answer to his question, but began at once.

Frank finished the song, and Mr. Leweson clapped his hands in applause.

"That'll bring the house down, if any thing will. Bravo, Mr. — I mean, Signor Cipriano, you know. Now, look here, I'm not going to have you encoored, and spoiling your voice, to please a lot of loonatics, so they needn't think it. To-night you may do it. I shall go on myself, and make a speech after it. You'll hear me. Patty this is our new singer, a very different sort to the rest, as you'll find. Signor, this is the Divine Giulia Silvani, only at home we call her Patty Silver; and she's worth her weight in gold, I can tell you. Here's her father."

Frank took off his hat, and shook hands with the girl. Her hands were rough and hard, her fingers thick — he noticed that as she stood gloveless on the stage; but her face was wonderfully soft and delicate in expression: one of those faces — the features not too good, and perhaps commonplace in character — which one meets from time to time in the London streets; not the face of a lady at all, but, at the same time, a loveable and good face. She was different to the ballet-girls, somehow — had none of their restlessness, did not laugh, did not jump about before the glass; stood quietly beside the piano, and just listened and waited. She was the female trapezist, and with her father performed the Miraculous Flying Leap for Life every night. Her little brother completed the talented Silvani Family; and, though yet of tender years, was admitted to a trifling performance on a small trapeze of his own, from which he could not fall more than twenty or thirty feet or so, — a mere trifle to a child of ten.

The family were special favorites of the manager, for some reason or other. His big head had a big heart connected with it, as more than one in the place had found out.

After singing his songs, and receiving the suggestions of his employer, Frank went with him to his private room. A paper was lying on the table.

"That's your agreement, Mr. Melliship. You pledge yourself to sing for me, and only me, for two months, at a fixed salary of three guineas a week, at least three ballads or songs every night. I introduce you to the public, and have my profit out of the small salary you will get. You see, Mr. Melliship, I'm a plain man. I like your voice. I like your appearance. I am making terms advantageous to myself, but not bad for you; and if you were to go to anybody in London you wouldn't get better for a first engagement. My conductor advised me to nail you down for six months, but I keep to my original terms. Treat me

well, Mr. Melliship, and I'll treat you well. So there we are; and, if you'll sign, a pint of champagne and a dry biscuit will help us a long."

Frank drank the champagne, signed his name, and went away, free until eight.

He dined at Mrs. Skimp's where old Mr. Eddrup was, as usual, made the butt of "Captain" Hamilton's wit. After dinner he smoked a pipe in the garden of the square; and then, as the time was fast approaching, he dressed himself with considerable care, and walked to the palace.

The place was crowded. Nearly every man had a glass before him, and a pipe or a cigar in his mouth. There were constant cries of "Waiter," constant popping of corks. The smell of tobacco was overpowering. The heat and gas made the place almost intolerable. Frank stood at the side wings while a ballet went on — not that which he had seen rehearsed, but a simpler one, intended to open the evening.

"After this, the Inexpressible Jones. After him, you," said Mr. Leweson. "That's to take him down a few pegs. He thinks he's got a tenor. With a voice like a cow."

The Inexpressible sang. He was encoored. He sang again. They wanted to encore him a second time. It was a charming pastoral, relating how he, the I. J., had been walking one evening in the fields, with an umbrella, and had there met a young lady belonging to the same exalted rank among the aristocracy as himself; how he had held a conversation with her under his umbrella; how she had promised to meet him the next evening, provided he came with his umbrella; how he had kept his appointment, with his umbrella, and how she had not. It was a comic song, acted with an umbrella, so true to life that the "loonatics" shrieked with laughter.

When the laughter had quite subsided, it was Frank's turn to go on.

Mr. Leweson was below among the audience, contemplating his patrons with an air of undisguised contempt. He was the first person Frank saw in the mass of heads beneath and in front of him.

For a moment, he trembled and lost his nerve. Only for a moment. As the piano struck up, he managed to see the words that were swimming before him, and plunged at once into his ballad of the domestic affections.

The chorus was more than admirable — it was superb: an invisible chorus, in soft voices, murmuring the refrain like an echo —

"For his mother — for his mother — for his mother."

till the people cried at the pathos.

"The loonatics," he heard the manager growling to himself.

The applause was tremendous. He retired amid a general yell of "'core — 'core!" and re-appeared a moment after with flushed cheeks — for even the approbation of "loonatics" is something — to sing "The Death of Nelson."

Frank went home that night satisfied, if not happy. He was a success at last, if only a success at three guineas a week. He prayed fervently that no old friends would come to detect him. If only he could preserve his incognito, all would be well.

He reckoned only on old friends. He had forgotten new acquaintances.

The very next day at dinner, after a general whispering at the upper end of the table, which Mr. Eddrup interpreted to mean an organized attack upon himself, Capt. Hamilton turned to him, and openly congratulated him on his success the preceding evening at the North London Palace of Amusement.

"Of course," said the gallant officer, "it was an unexpected pleasure to see, in the person of Signor Cipriano, a gentleman who does us the favor to dine at our humble table."

Frank reddened, and could find nothing to say.

Mr. Eddrup answered for him. It was the first time the old man had ever been known to speak.

"I congratulate you," he said to Frank, "on the possession of a talent which enables you to take honest work. Believe me, sir, all work is honest."

"Bravo, old Eddrup!" shouted the medical student. "We've made him speak at last. I always knew he was one of the most eloquent orators going."

Frank turned with flushed cheeks.

"At all events," he said, "it is better to sing in a public place than to — to —"

"To what, sir?" said the student.

"Singing cad!" escaped from the captain's lips, in tones very clearly audible.

Frank half arose from his seat, and turned towards the captain.

"Better than loafing about in billiard-rooms, and on suburban race-courses, Capt. Hamilton."

There was a dead silence.

"After dinner, sir," said Capt. Hamilton, after a pause, "we must have a word together."

"And me, too," said the medical student, with disregard for grammar.

"Stick to 'em," whispered Capt. Bowker. "Stick to 'em. They're only curs. I'll see fair play."

After dinner, Capt. Hamilton, none of

the rest leaving the room, came up to Frank as he stood in the window.

"Sir, you have insulted me."

"Probably."

It was calmly said, but Frank's lips were trembling.

"Sir, you must give me satisfaction."

"Take it, then," shouted the young man, striking out with his left arm.

The captain fell, and did not get up again.

"O gentlemen — gentlemen!" cried Mrs. Skimp, running before Frank, "don't fight, oh, pray don't fight! He owes me for six weeks," she whispered.

"I said he was a loafer, a welcher. I know he is. I have seen him ducked in a horsepond before to-day," said Frank, who was recovering his calmness.

The others all burst out laughing, except the medical student, who thought that perhaps his turn was coming next.

The captain rose slowly, but with dignity.

"This," he said, "will not end here. You will hear from me to-morrow."

He was leaving the room, the medical student going with him.

"Stop," said Frank. "There is something else to be said. Both yesterday and to-day — and, I believe, always — there has been made a series of attacks, personal, insulting, and caddish, on an old gentleman of perfectly inoffensive habits — Mr. Eddrup. The two principal offenders are you two, Capt. Hamilton and you — whatever your name is" — he pointed to the medical student. "Now, as I, for one, decline to belong to those who wilfully insult an old man, I intend to take his quarrel upon myself. Whoever insults Mr. Eddrup, henceforth, insults me. Now, Capt. Hamilton, and you other, you may go to the devil."

They went out.

Mrs. Skimp was the only one who regretted the incident.

"Six weeks due from the captain," she moaned, "and four from the other."

"Sir," said Capt. Bowker, wringing Frank's hand, "I'm proud of you. You're a good fellow, sir, a good fellow. I wish I could do something for you."

Frank laughed.

"You can," he said. "You can come and hear me sing 'The Death of Nelson,' if you like."

"By the Lord! I will," said the captain. "I haven't been to a place of amusement for ten years. I'll go to-night."

Mr. Eddrup said nothing. In his usual quiet and methodical manner he stepped out of the room, and went up-stairs.

In many cheap boarding-houses there is

a *Père Goriot*, young or old. In very few is there a man to be found with courage to stand up and protect a butt from the assault of his enemies.

That night Capt. Hamilton went out, and came back no more. His effects, when examined, were found to consist principally of one trunk, locked — filled with stones wrapped in newspapers.

CHAPTER XXXI.

At an early hour on the morning after his "first appearance," Frank awoke with strangely mingled feelings of disgust and pride. Mr. Leweson's loonatics had cheered him to the skies: that was something. On the other hand, to have been cheered by loonatics was not in itself, after the first surprise, an exhilarating memory. He got up, cursing his fate.

He went down to the palace, after breakfast, in the gloomiest frame of mind. He found the same ballet rehearsal going on only the second time it was not by any means so interesting, having lost its novelty. Ballet-girls, he was able to remark, romantic as the profession appears to outsiders, possess much of the commonplace nature of the untutored feminine animal. He speculated on their probable ambition, on the subjects which occupied their minds, and exercised their intellects. Subsequent investigation, followed by discovery, taught him in time that they never do think at all except about the means of getting dress, and have no intellects to exercise. Mr. Leweson was in his office, but too busy to see him, only sending out a note that the performance of last night might be repeated if he wished; if not, he had only to select his songs.

Frank felt quite indifferent as to what songs he sang, and so was turning away to leave the place, when he saw the pretty girl to whom he had been introduced the day before, the *Divine Giulia*. She was with her father, superintending the arrangement of certain trapeze ropes for a new feat they were to perform that evening. Her dress was changed. She had on the singular costume which was invented, I suppose, when female gymnasts first came into fashion — something like the "page" dress of the stage. The *Divine Giulia* was attired in Turkish trousers — which disappeared at night — a crimson scarf, and what I have reason to believe is called a *chemisette*. Her hair — brown, full, and wavy — was gathered up at the back of her head in such rich masses that no chignon

was necessary. Her father was also dressed in the uniform of his profession, but without the spangles which covered him in the evening. With them was a little boy, the youthful *Joey*, also attired in the family costume. Frank staid to look.

"May I look on while you practise?" he asked, shaking hands with the acrobat and his daughter.

"Of course you may, Mr. — Signor."

"Signor Cipriano, father," said Patty.

"My name is Melliship," said Frank, red-dening.

"You may help us too," said the girl. "Set this mattress straight. So. Now lay this one along the tables. That is right. Ready, father?"

One of the men regularly employed stood at the bar to set it swinging. They were to fly, one after the other — the girl first — across the house, swinging from one trapeze to the next, and landing on a little platform near the end: a common feat enough, complicated by what the playbills called a summersault in "mid-air" by the father.

Silvani *père* was a stout, strongly built man, about forty years of age, or a little over. The muscles showed through his tight flashings like rope bands.

"Fancy having to assist your governor in turning summersaults," thought Frank.

It was a question whether the ropes should not be lengthened by a foot or so, which would naturally increase the distance to be traversed, but lessen the danger. Mr. Silver gave it against the longer length.

"But you may kill yourself," said Frank, "for want of that extra foot."

"I don't think so. After all, a man can only die once. Patty, my dear, you're not afraid?"

She shook her head merrily, and mounted the ladder. Frank trembled as she stood at the top, — slight, graceful, slender poising herself like a bird on the wing. Her father mounted after her, and took another pair of ropes, standing behind her.

She gave a sign: the man set the trapeze swinging, and Patty let herself go. The instant she touched the first bar, her father followed, catching it as it swung back when she left it. In a moment they were standing side by side on a platform in front of the first circle.

"Not quite steady enough. We must do it again."

"No, don't," cried Frank, "don't. Surely once is enough."

The girl laughed, and climbed again. Frank was standing on a mattress at the far end of the house, nearly under the

landing-place, that is to say, close under the dress-circle. The feat looked a great deal more dangerous in an empty theatre, by daylight, than when the gas was lit, and the place crammed with spectators.

Now, whether his nervousness communicated itself to Patty, I know not; but when she left the two rings, and should have caught the first bar, she missed it. Frank rushed forward and caught her by the shoulders, just as she would have fallen heavily on the mattresses.

The weight of a girl of eighteen, though she be a trapezist in full training, is no small matter, particularly when the velocity of her flight is taken into consideration. The momentum of the body in motion is represented, in applied mathematics, as a quantity composed of the mass multiplied by the velocity, which is, to the outer world, much as if one were to say pigs multiplied by candles. You will realize what is meant, if any thing heavy falls upon you. Frank fell back, with Patty upon him. She was up in an instant, unhurt.

Her father, seeing the accident as he flew through the air, kept tight hold of his rings, and swung backwards and forwards until he could safely alight.

"Why, Patty," he cried, "I've never known you to do such a thing before."

The girl was up in a moment, shaken, but not hurt. Frank was not so fortunate. Her head, butting full against his nose, caused that member to bleed, a prosaic ending to a deed of some heroism and skill; for he caught her like a cricket ball, only with the softest and most delicate handling possible, just as if he had always been practising the art of catching trapeze girls so as not to hurt them.

Mr. Leweson, too, came running up. He was just in time to witness the accident.

"Are you hurt, Patty, are you hurt?"

"Not a bit; not a bit:" her lip was trembling in the effort to suppress an hysterical sob. "I should have been, if it had not been for Mr. Melliship, though. We ought to ask him if he is hurt."

Frank was holding his handkerchief to his nose, and only shook his head, to intimate that the damage done was such as could easily be repaired.

"Good heaven!" cried Mr. Leweson; "and you might have flown straight against the woodwork. Mr. Melliship, it was splendidly — splendidly done, sir."

"Well," said Mr. Silver, "as nobody's hurt, and we've got to do it to-night, I suppose we had better try it again, Patty."

"No, no," began Frank.

"Young gentleman," said Mr. Silver, "please don't interfere with our professional work."

"You are not too much shaken, Patty?" interposed the manager.

"Not shaken a bit. Now, father, we'll do it this time."

She ran up the ladder lightly with her rings, flew through the air from bar to bar, and arrived at the landing-stage with the precision of a bird, followed by her sire.

"Now, there," said Mr. Leweson, "is a splendid creature for you. Now you see why I wanted you to go on the trapeze with Giulia. Think of the triple act that I had in my mind, — Signor Silvani holding the rings; three bars, each two feet lower than the other; on the Signor's shoulders you would stand, Giulia on yours. The flight through the air: the first bar for Giulia, the second for you, the third for the father of the family. The most magnificent idea in acrobaticism ever conceived. But there, if it can't be, it can't of course. Now, then, Patty, hoist up the boy, and get your practice done."

He walked aside, with his hand in Frank's arm, while the child went through his performances.

"Mr. Melliship," he said abruptly, "you are a gentleman, that is clear. I dare say an army man, now."

"No — I told you — I am a Cambridge man."

"Ah! — well. But there are different sorts of gentlemen, you see. Now, I think more goes to make a gentleman than knowing how to eat, and talk, and dress, and behave. I know the breed is rare; but there is a sort of gentleman in this country who does not run after every pretty face he meets, fancying that every pretty girl is his natural prey. I say there is that sort of gentleman in the world; and I should be very glad to think you belong to the kind, Mr. Melliship. That's a long preamble; but what I mean is this — excuse my plain speaking — but I don't want my little Patty humbugged, and I won't have it, sir; I say, I won't have it, by any one. There — there — I'm a fool."

"You can trust me," said Frank. "I am not likely either to fall in love with her, or she with me."

"Humph!" growled the man with the big head, looking curiously at him. "I don't know that. Well — well — I've said what I wanted to, and you are not angry; so it is all right. Come and have some fizz, Patty, my girl. After your shake, it will do you good."

They all went to the manager's room.

when he produced a bottle of champagne, which they discussed together. If Mr. Leweson had a weakness, it was for champagne. Patty Silver shared it. Champagne was the one thing connected with the department of the interior which Patty cared for.

"Very odd," thought Frank. "Here's the manager giving champagne to a family of acrobates. Wonder if they always do it at music halls."

I believe, as a rule, that acrobates are not so well treated by managers.

In this particular case there were reasons why Mr. Leweson was especially kind to his talented Silvani Family. It is a story which hardly belongs to us. In the years gone by, there had been a forlorn little Israelite boy, whose father and mother died in a far-off land, leaving him alone to the care of strangers. None of his own people were in that American town. Then a Christian man, a blacksmith by trade, took him in, and housed him. The Christian man was Signor Silvani's father; the little Jew was Mr. Emmanuel Leweson. Years went on. The Jew became a musician, a singer, a composer; the Christians went down in the world; and the whirligig of time brought them all together again: Harry Silver, an acrobat; Emmanuel Leweson, the manager and part proprietor, principal shareholder, of the great North London Palace of Amusement.

All this is irrelevant, save that it explains why the manager produced his champagne, and why he gave his warnings to Frank in language so emphatic.

The family resumed the ordinary attire of humble British citizens, and Frank walked away with them. They lived in a small house, in one of those streets of gloomy small houses which abound in Islington. Patty nodded good-by to him, and ran up the steps with her brother, opening the door with a latch-key.

"Sir," said her father, when she had gone in, "you saved my daughter's life. What shall I say to thank you?"

"Nothing. Why do you let her do it?"

"We must live. There is nothing dishonest in it. There is not half the risk that you think about it. As for me, I feel almost as safe on the trapeze as you do on the pavement, and so does Patty, for that matter."

"But—but"—Frank hesitated.

"Immodest, you think it is. I don't know, sir; I don't know. There isn't a better girl than my girl in all London, and I defy you to find one. No, I had a great exercise of my conscience before I let her go; only her gifts were too strong. It was

a flying in the face Providence not to let her take a way which was opened, so to speak, unto her. I laid the matter before my friend, Mr. Eddrup"—

"Eddrup! He that lives at Mrs. Skimp's in Gr-nville Square?"

"There is only one Mr. Eddrup, young man. The Lord can't spare more than one at a time like him. Do you know him?"

"I live in the same house. Tell me about him."

"Ah, I think you had better find out about him. Well, I laid the matter before him, and he decided that if the girl liked, and I was always there to look after her, there would be no harm done. If you live in the same house as Mr. Eddrup, young gentleman, you try to talk to him. It was he that showed me the Light."

Frank stared.

"Before I knew Mr. Eddrup, I was clean gone astray, and out of the way altogether. Now I'm a different man. So is Patty. Do you mean that Mr. Eddrup has never said a word in season to you?"

"Not yet. I've only been in the house two days."

"Then wait; or, if you are not one of those who go about scoffing and sneering at good men, come with me on Sunday evening. But you're a gentleman, Mr. Melliship. You go to the Establishment, I suppose."

Frank was too much astonished to find religion in an acrobat to answer.

"There is spiritual food of different kinds," Mr. Silver went on. "I can't get my nourishment in the Church of England. Mind you, I'm not saying a word against it. But I like freedom. I like to have my say if I've got any thing to say, and when my heart is full."

"What denomination do you belong to?" asked Frank.

"To none, sir, at present. Why should I? Every man is a priest in his own house. I am of the religion of Abraham. First, I was a Plymouth Brethren; then I was a Primitive Methodists, then I was a Particular Baptists. I've tried the Huntingdon Connection, and the Independents, and the Wesleyans; but I don't like them. I don't like any of them. So I stay at home and read the Book, or else I go and hear Mr. Eddrup on Sunday nights."

"Let me come and talk to you," said Frank. "You shall tell me more about yourself, if you will. I promise, at least, not to scoff and sneer at good things."

"I'm an illiterate man, sir; and you are a gentleman, with education, and all that, I dare say. But come when you like."

"Let me come next Sunday evening. You shall give me some tea," said Frank.

in his lordly way, as if he were inviting himself to a man's rooms at college.

Mr. Silver looked after him with a puzzled expression, and went up the steps to dinner.

"A gentleman," he said to Patty, "who doesn't swear and use bad language: who doesn't look as if he got drunk; who doesn't go about with a big pipe in his mouth: who doesn't seem to mind talking about religious things. We don't get many such gentlemen at the Palace of Amusement, do us?"

"But, father," said Patty, laying the things out for dinner, "how does a gentleman come to be singing in the palace? Gentlemen don't sing, do they, in public places for money?"

"I never heard of it. I will ask Mr. Eddrup. Here's dinner. Joey, say grace."

In these early days, Frank thought it best to go every morning to the palace. This pleased Mr. Leweson, who had conceived an immense admiration for his new tenor. He showed this by solemnly presenting him with a tenor song of his own composing, which Frank sung, after the fourth night, in place of that song of the domestic affections already quoted. It was not so popular; but that, as Mr. Leweson remarked, was clear proof of its real worth. Had the loonatics applauded, he said he should have felt it his duty, as a musician, to put the song in the fire.

Sunday came, and Frank bethought him of his invitation to take tea with his new friends. Skimp's dined at four o'clock on Sundays. After dinner, Mrs. Skimp went to church, and her boarders chiefly amused themselves by playing at billiards. To the younger portion, the students, there was something particularly attractive in playing a forbidden game on Sunday; to the older ones, the chance of picking up a few stray sixpences at pool was quite enough of itself to make them prefer knocking the balls about to smoking pipes all the evening. Besides, they could unite the two amusements. Capt. Bowker went to church, to smooth out his ideas, he said, though no one understood in the least what he meant. I think he liked the quiet of church, where he could abstract his mind from all affairs, spiritual as well as worldly, and compose his verses. Mr. Eddrup, as usual, appeared at dinner, ate in silence what was set before him, and disappeared noiselessly.

Frank found his friends waiting for him, Patty with an extra ribbon. Her father was sitting with a Bible before him, his one book, which he read at all times. On Sundays, when he had a clear day before him, he used to read the Prophecies, applying

them to modern times, and working out all problems of the present by their light. He had no books to help him, unless Swedenborg's "Heaven and Hell" be considered a help. Reading day after day, as he did, the words had come to have to him, as they have done to some theologians, a sort of threefold sense; the historic, the prophetic, and the hidden or inner sense. The pursuit of the last occupied all his thoughts.

The room was poorly furnished, for the family income was but small. Three or four chairs, a table, and a sideboard constituted the whole of it. No servant was apparent; and Patty and Joe were up and down the stairs, bringing up the tea-things, laughing and chattering.

"I'm glad to see you, Mr. Melliship," said his host. "Now, I call this friendly. Patty, my dear, make haste up with the tea, because it's getting late."

"It's quite ready, father. We were only waiting for Mr. Melliship."

Watercresses, and bread and butter. Patty pouring out the tea. Her father with his finger on the Bible, enunciating things prophetic.

"I was reading what Ezekiel says about the world in our time, Mr. Melliship."

"Did Ezekiel write about our time?" asked Frank, thinking what a pity Patty's hands should be so spoiled by her acrobatic work.

"All time—every time. I can read, sir, the events of to-day and to-morrow in his pages, as plain as I can in a newspaper. I can tell you, if you like to listen, what is going to happen in the world before you die."

"Tell me," said Frank.

Mr. Silver held up his finger, and began. As he went on, in short jerky sentences, his eyes wandered from Frank's and fixed themselves in space, the gaze becoming deeper, and the expression as of one who reads things far off.

"A day of judgment and lamentation, when even the righteous shall be sifted. Afterwards the good time. A day of gathering of the nations upon the earth. The great battle, the final battle, shall be fought, after which there shall be no more wars. The Lord's battle will be fought on the Lord's battlefield, the Plain of Esdrælon; the battle of the people against the priests, and all their power. After it, the priests shall clothe themselves with trembling as with a garment. Know," he continued after a pause, stretching his hand across the table, and still with his eyes fixed in vacancy—"know that, from time long gone by, even from the days of the Chaldeans who first invented the accursed thing, the arm of the Lord has been against the

priesthood. There is one nation the enemy of the human race. the nation of the priests. Whether they call themselves Catholic, or Anglican, or Dissenting, or Heathen, the spirit is alike. It is the spirit of darkness and tyranny."

"Mr. Melliship, is your tea to your liking?" whispered Patty.

"It is the spirit of pride and falsehood. Every dogma that blindfolds men's eyes is the invention of a priest; every accursed form of denomination is the invention of the priests; every evil government has been maintained by the priests. They have made the world what it is; they have substituted fear for love; they keep the people ignorant, they darken counsel, and shut out light."

"Joey, run up and fetch my bonnet," said Patty.

"Then you want to abolish all priests?" said Frank, looking with wonder at the religious enthusiast.

"I am on the Lord's side," he replied simply. "I would that I might live to fight in the great battle when it comes, and to fight against the priests. Priests! I am a priest. We are all priests; every man in his own house, as the patriarchs were before us. Remember, young man, that this is no light matter. It will be your place to take a side, and that before long. Russia is advancing south, as Ezekiel prophesied. Turkey is falling to pieces, and will soon be even as she who was once decked with ornaments; with bracelets on her hands and a chain upon her neck; who went astray and was confounded, as Ezekiel prophesied. All things came from Palestine: all things go back to Palestine. They are going to make a railway down the valley of the Euphrates: then they will rebuild the city of Babylon. In time to come, that shall be the city of wealth and trade; when London will be deserted. The city of the Lord shall then be rebuilt too; even the city of David, with a Temple which shall have no priests. It shall be the reign of peace. All nations shall come into the Church, and the millennium shall be begun. Even so, O Lord: Thy will be done!"

He folded his hands, as he concluded his speech, in a silent prayer.

"Drink your tea, father," said Patty; "it's getting cold, and it's late, besides."

"Where are we going, Miss Silver?" asked Frank.

"Miss Silver!" Patty laughed merrily. "I never was called Miss Silver in my life before. Call me Patty, Mr. Melliship."

"I will, if you will call me Frank."

"Indeed, I shall do nothing of the kind.

You are a gentleman, and don't belong to our rank of life. Hush, don't move. Don't disturb father. He's often so, after talking about the Bible."

The enthusiast was bent forward, with his eyes fixed, gazing out of the window. He neither heard nor saw—he was in a trance. Frank looked at him anxiously. Then, moved by the impulse of his artistic nature, he took a book from the table. It was Patty's hymn-book, and on the fly-leaf began to sketch her father with his pencil. Patty looked over his shoulder in speechless admiration. In three minutes it was done, a rude, rough sketch, slightly idealized, so as to bring out the noble ruggedness of the man's brow, the wild depth of his eyes, the setting of his lips.

"Oh! it's wonderful," Patty whispered.

"Shall I draw you?" asked Frank in a whisper. "Sit down, and I will try."

She sat down, blushing; but the next minute sprang up again, whispering,—

"Not to-day, not while father is like that. Don't speak."

She took the Bible from him, and looked at the portrait with devouring eyes. Some subtle beauty the artist had put into the lines which she had never noticed before in her father's face, and saw it there now for the first time.

They sat for two or three minutes more in silence, and then Mr. Silver threw his head back with a sigh, and looked round the room.

"It is late," he said. "Let us go."

"But where are we going?" asked Frank again.

"Why, to Mr. Eddrup's church, of course."

He followed in astonishment. Who and what was this Mr. Eddrup, that these people should so look up to him?

Patty and he walked together.

"I shall show the picture to father," she said, "but not to-night; not till the fit is off him. I suppose you were surprised to find us in such a nice house? We couldn't afford to rent it, you know; but it's Mr. Leweson's, and he gives it to us for nothing. We sometimes let lodgings, only I don't know—it is such a trouble."

"You had better again," said Frank. "I will be your lodger."

"Ah! I don't know. I should like it, you know," she replied simply; "but father's particular. You might turn out bad, after all. And then see where we should be!"

"Well, I haven't turned out very good, so far," said Frank, with a sigh.

"Here we are at the church," said Patty, stopping at a door.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A STAIRCASE steep as a ladder, led to a long low room, filled with people. It might have held about eighty, because audiences of all kinds, whether for religion or amusement, pack closely. The windows were open, because the night was close. The room was lighted by two or three gas-jets, and fitted up with benches for the body of the room, and a foot-high platform for the end. This was garnished with a rough hand-rail, not for any separation of the minister from the people, but for a leaning-place on which he might rest his hands. Two or three chairs were on the platform. One of these was empty. Mr. Silver, leaving Frank in the hands of his daughter, went to the end, and took the vacant seat with a slight but noticeable air of pride. The only arm-chair was occupied by Mr. Eddrup, who was leaning his head on his hands, motionless.

The people were the common people of the neighborhood; rough, coarse men, and rough, coarse women. They all knew each other, and occasionally telegraphed salutes with friendly grins. A few carried babies; but there were very few children present, and those only so small as not to be able to take care of themselves. They whispered a good deal to each other, but in a hushed, serious way. Laughter and levity there were none.

The worshippers in this humble Ebenezer were called, as Frank afterwards discovered, the Primitive Blueskins, by the scoffers in the neighborhood. The reason, as told to him was a queer story, which may or may not be true. It told how forty years ago, before Mr. Eddrup went to the place, there had been an attempt — a very little one — to promote in the court some form of Christian worship. This room, the same in which they always met, had been fixed upon as the only room available. It was old and shaky, and it was built over a dyeing establishment. One cold winter night, soon after they had formed themselves into a congregation, the reverend gentleman who conducted their exercises, whether driven by religious zeal or impelled by the severity of the weather, enforced his arguments by an unwonted physical activity, stamping, gesticulating, and even jumping. He calculated *nimum credulous*, on the strength of the floor. Alas! it gave way. The boards broke beneath the unaccustomed strain. The table, on which were two candles, was upset; and, amid the darkness, the little flock could hear only the groans of their pastor and the splashing of liquid. The last

flash of the overturning lights had shown him vanishing through the flooring. They turned and fled. It was some time before they ventured to return. But they found their minister blue. He was dyed; he had fallen into the vat prepared for an indigo day. Besides this, he was half frozen. After this the congregation dispersed. Nor was it till Mr. Eddrup came that they re-assembled; and when they did, the nickname stuck to them still.

Patty pulled Frank by the arm, and they humbly took the lowest places of all, the very last, with their backs against the wall.

"It's going to begin directly," whispered the girl. "You must look over my hymn-book. There's Mr. Eddrup."

As she spoke, the old man rose and advanced to the front of the platform, grasping the rail.

"If any have aught to say" — he spoke a kind of formula — "let him or her now say it."

A laboring man rose up, and incoherently delivered himself of a few short and unconnected sentences. Then he sat down, perspiring. He had an idea which he wanted to set forth, but language was too strong for him, and he had failed.

Mr. Eddrup looked round again. No one else spoke. Then he took a hymn-book, and gave out a number. They took their hymns like their tea, sitting; but sang with none the less fervor.

Then their leader — for such Mr. Eddrup was — rose to address them, with his hands on the rail, his head held down, and his white hair falling forward in a long mass that almost hid his face.

"Into what queer world have I dropped?" thought Frank. "A religious trapeze family; a man who lives at Skimp's, and preaches to people; I myself, who sing at a music hall, and come here on Sundays. It all seems very irregular."

Mr. Eddrup, still looking on the ground, with his long, white hair hanging about him, began his discourse in a slow, hesitating way, as if he was feeling, not for ideas, but for fitting words to put them in. Presently he warmed a little with his subject, and, lifting his head, spoke in clearer and fuller tones. His audience went with him, devouring every word he said. They were wise words. He spoke of the every day life of a religious man, of the temptations that beset the poor, of the strength which comes of resistance. He had that native eloquence which comes of earnestness. He wished to say the right thing in the most forcible way. So, when he had found the right thing, he took the simplest words that lay to his hand, and the readiest illustra-

tion. Socrates did the same. A higher than Socrates did the same. He talked to them for two hours. During all that time, not a soul stirred. All eyes were fixed upon the speaker. There was no interruption, save now and again when a woman sobbed. It was not that he told them the hackneyed things that preachers love to dwell upon,—the general phrases, the emotional doctrines; all these Mr. Eddrup passed by. He told them unpalatable things; little things; things which are a perpetual hindrance to the progress of the soul, which yet seem to have nothing to do with the soul. He laid down directions for them which showed that he knew exactly all their circumstances. He showed them how religion is a flower that grows upon all soils alike, nourished by the same sun which shines upon rich and poor. And, lastly, in a peroration which made the ears of those that heard it to tingle, he proclaimed the infinite love of the Creator. He stopped suddenly, sat down, and was silent.

They sang a hymn, and the people went away.

"Tell me the meaning of it," asked Frank of Patty. "Who and what is Mr. Eddrup?"

"Come away, and I will tell you. Father likes to have a chat with him of a Sunday night. Come, Joey. He came here," said Patty, "forty years ago and more. He was a young man, I've been told, and strong; but he was always very sad and silent. He began by searching out—always in this court—the poor children, and getting them to school in the morning. He taught it himself, and gave them bread and tea for breakfast. People liked that, you know, and the children liked it. Then he got to having the men to evening school at eight o'clock. A few of them went. The court was the most awful place, I've been told, in all London. Mr. Eddrup was robbed a dozen times going away at night—beaten, too, and ill-treated. But he always came again next day, just as if nothing had happened. They do say that nothing would make him prosecute a thief. So when the boys found there was no danger and no fun in stealing his handkerchief or knocking him down, of course they left off. Well, so it went on, you see. Gradually the court got better. Mr. Eddrup got the houses into his own hands by degrees, because he's a very well-to-do man, you know, and made them clean. They were pigsties before. He never turned anybody out; never sold up their sticks for rent; always waited and waited, and, they say, he always gets paid."

"Has he turned the people into angels, then?"

"No. I don't say that. But they're better than the run of people. He has made them a religious lot which was the most dreadful lot in all London. Parsons come here now, and want the people to go to church. Not they. So long as Mr. Eddrup preaches in the little chapel, there they go."

"All this must cost him money as well as time."

"He spends all he's got, whatever that may be, Mr. Melliship, on the poor. I've been told that he never takes any thing stronger than water, and has only one room to himself, all to have more for the poor people."

"Some of that is true, I know," said Frank.

"Oh, those flowers!" cried Patty, as they passed a flower-girl. "How sweet they smell!"

"Let me give you some," said Frank. Now, Patty had never had any flowers given her before. It was a new sensation that a man—or anybody, indeed—should pay her attentions. She went home with her present, and put the flowers in water. If Frank had been able to see how carefully those poor flowers were watered, and how long they lasted! It will be understood at once that Patty's stage-career had been very different to that of most young ladies of her profession. Always with her father, taken by him to the theatre, brought home by him, she was as domestic a little bird as any in all this great wilderness of houses.

"Poor Patty!" thought Frank as he walked home. "A dreary life for her, to risk her life every night for so many shillings or pounds a week; to have no lovers, like other girls; no pleasure but to go and hear Mr. Eddrup preach."

Mr. Eddrup had returned when he reached home, and was sitting, silent as usual, in the drawing-room with Capt. Bowker, who had his long pipe alight, and his glass of rum and water before him.

"You were there to-night," said the old preacher. "The Silvers brought you."

"They did," said Frank. "Thank you, very much."

Capt. Bowker smoked on. He was in a meditative mood.

"I went once," he said, "myself. Should have gone again, but I saw one of my last old crew there. Couldn't go, and sit on the same bench with him, you know. Stations must be observed. Mr. Melliship, it's just as well to say that Mr. Eddrup here doesn't care to have his Sunday evening's occupation known."

"Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame," said Frank.

"No, Mr. Melliship no," replied the old man sadly. "There has never been a time when I have not been beset by temptation to be proud of a trifling piece of work like mine. I should like to be famous, if only in the smallest way; but I pray against it. I formed the resolution, very long ago, that there was only one course for me in life: to go through it as noiselessly as I could, do as little mischief as possible, to resent no injury."

"But why?" asked Frank. "Why?"

"Some day I will tell you, perhaps. Not now. I am glad you came to hear me talk to my people, Mr. Melliship. It is a long time since we have had a — anybody but my own people. It does them good to see strangers. Let me look at your face, sir."

Frank held up his face, smiling, to the light, while the old man walked feebly — Frank noticed how very feeble he was after his exertions in the chapel — to the chair where he sat, and looked at him steadily.

"There is the seal of innocence, and the seal of guilt. This is the seal of innocence. Keep it, young man. Look at mine. Do you see nothing?"

"Nothing," said Frank.

Mr. Eddrup sighed, and sat down again. A few minutes afterwards he stole out of the room, and slipped up stairs to bed.

"He's often like that," said Capt. Bowker. "Something on his mind. I had a cook aboard the *Merry Moonshine* once, used to sit all day long, and never speak to a soul. Took a fancy to a Lascar, and would sometimes talk to him. No one else, mind. One day he up with the chopper, and buried it three inches in the Lascar's head. Then, before you could say Jack Robinson, over he went — ship going ten knots. Lascar dead in a minute. *Mr. Eddrup's took a fancy to you!*"

"That's a cheerful sort of story to tell. Do you think Mr. Eddrup may be tempted to do something rash with the carving-knife?"

"I can't say," said the captain solemnly. "No one can say what another man will do, or what terrible thing may happen to him. I've been married myself."

"Then you may be married again."

"Lord forbid! There's ghosts again. I suppose you never saw a ghost?"

"Never."

"Nor more did I. But I have *felt* one, young man. I've been beat black and blue by a ghost. Rum thing, that was."

"Tell it me."

"There it is, you see. You get making

me sit up spinning my yarns when I ought to be in my berth. Sunday night too. Well, I'll tell you this one. It was forty years ago. I was a midshipman aboard an East Indiaman. We'd had bad weather and put into Port Louis to refit; for the matter of that, we always put in there in the good old days. I was ashore with two or three more, drinking as boys will, in the veranda of a hotel there. There was a chap, an Englishman with a solemn face and a long nose, got talking to us. I remember his hatchet jaws now. Presently he whispers across the little table, —

"I want two or three plucky fellows. Will you come?"

"What for?" we asked him.

"Money," says he. "Treasure."

"Do you know where it is?" I said.

"I do," says he.

"Then, why don't you get it yourself?" says I.

"That seemed to fix him a bit. Then he says, —

"Because I can't do it alone, and I won't trust anybody but English sailors. It's money buried by the pirates up in the hillside over there. I know the exact spot. There is a story going about that the place is haunted; but we ain't afraid of ghosts, I *should* hope."

"We agreed for next night, if we could get leave, and went aboard again. All that day and the next we were talking it over. The mate heard us. He came up to me laughing.

"So you're not afraid of ghosts, are you?"

"However, we got our leave, and went ashore. The mate went too.

"It's dark in those latitudes between six and seven, and at that time we met our long-nosed friend. He had got pickaxes and a lantern, and led the way. There were four of us altogether. We had to pick our way, when we left the path, over stones and through bushes; and, what was very odd, I kept on thinking I heard steps behind us. Being only a slip of a boy, I begins to get nervous. Presently our guide stopped.

"Here we are," he says; and, pointing to a place under a tree, he hangs up the lantern, and takes off his coat and began to dig. 'Now boys,' he says, 'as quick as you can.'

"We fell to with a will. It was a precious hot night, and the ground was hard; but we made a hole in it after a bit, and then at it tooth and nail. Five minutes after we began, I looked up to straighten my back, and found the lantern gone.

"Who's unshipped the light?" I says.

"We all looked round. There was a

young moon to give us a little light, but no lantern. I, for one, felt queer. However, we all went on again without saying a word. We got a hole two feet deep, and were all in it. Then one of my mates wants to know how long the job's going to last.

" 'Perhaps,' he says, 'the ghosts have sunk it fifty fathoms deep.' "

" 'Ghosts be d—d,' said lantern jaws. 'Dig away, boys.' "

" Then we heard a laugh close by us.

" 'Ho! — ho! — ho!' "

" It was a curious place for echoes among the rocks, and the laugh went ringing round and round till you thought it was never going to stop. We all stopped for a bit.

" 'Go on,' says our leader. 'They can't do more than laugh.' "

" With that another laugh, louder than the first. However, we went on. Then I heard steps; and looking up, I saw three or four figures over the hole.

" 'Lord!' I cried. 'Here's the ghosts.' "

" Well, I hadn't hardly time to sing out, when whack, whack, came half a dozen sticks on our heads and backs, and we all tumbled together. I suppose the sticks went at us for five minutes in all. When they stopped, I got up the first, grabbed my jacket, hanging on the tree, and legged it, tumbling over the rocks, and scratching myself in the bushes, as fast as ever mortal man ran in his life. The rest all came after me. What became of mealy face, I don't know. Praps the ghosts finished him off.

" Half an hour after we got to the port, the mate came up with three friends. They were all laughing at some joke of theirs.

" 'Well, my lads, says he, 'did you see any ghosts?' "

" No one answered, and they all laughed louder.

" The oddest thing of all, Mr. Mellship," concluded Capt. Bowker, laying his pipe-stem impressively on Frank's hand, " was that next morning my cap, which I had left behind in the hole, was found in the boat. Now, *how did that get there?* "

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A WORD about Parkside, where Grace Heathcote sat waiting and hoping. It is the way of things. A man works and hopes, and is sure to be disappointed. A woman waits and hopes, generally getting disappointed too.

Dull enough it was, and quiet, unless when Cousin Dick was with them. The

Heathcote girls were — by right of education, not of position — something better than the commonplace young ladies of the quiet market town. They saw little of them, and made few friends. Moreover, they were five miles away from Market Basing, so that they were practically thrown upon their own resources. That meant that they talked, and made each other unhappy. This, I believe, is not uncommon in English households — that sweet domesticity on which we pride ourselves covering an infinite amount of petty miseries, tiny bullyings, naggings, and prickings with tongues as sharp as needles. Sister against sister — mother against daughter. They love each other fondly, of course, because they are always supposed to love each other; domestic affection being as necessary in modern life as a shirt to one's back. Unfortunately, the love which reigns in the dear home life does not always bring with it that tenderness for each other's sensitive points which keeps out of the house ill-humors and sour tempers. The lower classes of England — I do not mean the very lowest — are much superior to the middle classes in this respect. I have found out the reason why. They don't sit at home so much. In London, they are always going to the theatre, which is almost the only amusement for the class who frequent the pit, and are not above the gallery. In the country, they go out and about as much as they can.

" Now, Grace Heathcote had a large share not only of fidelity, but of obstinacy, which she inherited from her father. A woman's fidelity is very often like one of those plants which flourish best covered up and hidden. Grace's prospered best openly — in the sunshine — and was able to grow and flourish even against the east wind of her mother's opposition. To her, Frank was a hero. It seemed noble in him to go away into a sort of hiding — working, as she imagined, to pay off his father's liabilities, and hoping to come back after many months to claim her promised hand. This she thought, and this she said when, as happened not unfrequently, her mother turned the talk upon Frank.

To Lydia Heathcote, Frank seemed as a fool. And she said so. For she was determined on one thing: her daughter should marry Dick Mortimer. She saw that Grace attracted him. She was sure — for she meant well by her daughter, — that he would make a good husband. She wanted to secure all that money of his for her own children. She was wise as well as determined. She knew that as the constant dropping of waters wears away the hardest rock, so the constant insinua-

tions of distrust and suspicion wear away the fondest woman's trust. Therefore she talked a good deal about Frank; repeated and reiterated her grief that he was doing so badly, as she assumed; pointed out how foolish it was to go away from his friends, and those who would help him to a decent position; hinted that it would be so much better if he were to emigrate, and follow the example of his cousin Dick; never failed to shed tears over the enumeration of dear Dick's many virtues, as contrasted with the failings and weaknesses of Frank; and always ended by reproachfully sighing over her daughter, as over one who trifles with a good man's love.

"But, mamma, Frank will get on, I'm sure. Kate said in her letter she knew he was doing well. He is very clever. He can paint beautifully; and it was only the other evening, at the rectory, that Mr. Nelson said artists were just as well off as any other professional men, and as well thought of. If he likes painting better than any thing else, and sees his way to get on, why should he not be an artist?"

"Nonsense, child," was her mother's answer to Grace's special pleading. And then Mrs. Heathcote explained, for the hundredth time, the reasons why Frank could never, by any possibility, be in a position to marry. "Besides, if Kate knows he is doing very well in London, it is a strange thing they don't know where he lives. You know, your father would write to him if he knew where to find him. But we couldn't even give Dick his address before he went to town. Such a want of respectability about having no address! It's no use, Grace; I know perfectly well that the boy is doing no good for himself, else why not let his friends know his address?"

"I am not going to listen," said Grace indignantly, "to things like that. You have no right to say such things of Frank."

"There—there, Grace, do be reasonable. It is all for your own good that I speak. If your own mother does not know the world, who should? Why, before I married your father, there were two or three people I fancied. Young Spriggs, the brewer, who failed for thirty thousand pounds, and cut his throat—I might have had him. Mr. Potterton, of Wyncote—he's got an asthma now: you can hear him a mile off, poor man. And old Mr. Humble-dum, who died of drink last week—why, people used to talk about us. That was before I met your father. And look at Dick—poor Dick!—head over ears in love with you."

"To begin with, he is nothing of the sort. And, if he were, it would be nothing to me."

"I can see it, girl," said Mrs. Heathcote, wisely nodding her head. "I've seen it for months now. I think it is—I suppose it doesn't matter what I think—cruel of you never to give him the slightest civility. Poor fellow! you might be even polite to him when he comes."

Grace beat a tattoo on the carpet with her foot, but said nothing.

"I only hope he does not notice it so much as I do. I've no patience with your father; he's as easy as an old shoe about things. If he'd told you to give Frank up when they left"—

"Mamma!" cried Grace, her cheek reddening and her eye flashing brightly. Mrs. Heathcote was a little afraid of her daughter when she looked like that. She saw she had gone a little too far—not for the first time. "Mamma, how dare you"—

The door opened, and Mr. Heathcote came into the room. Grace fell into his arms, and with her head on his shoulder, sobbed like a child. She would not have broken out if they had remained alone.

"Lydia," said Mr. Heathcote angrily, "what have you been saying to Grace? Never mind, my child—never mind."

"Really, John," said his wife, "you and Grace together are enough to wear out the patience of Job," and she swept from the room.

And so on. Scenes that happened not once, but often. And with each one Grace became obstinate, and her mother more irritating. Lucy was made unhappy. The farmer was made unhappy: that was nothing. Civil war raged in Parkside Farm, and the contest was maintained on terms of perfect equality, in which Grace, shielded by a stubborn resolution, received all her mother's blows, and only occasionally retaliated with words which had more of sharpness than filial piety. Dick brought peace for the time, and there was renewed war when he was gone.

A truce was held on a tacit understanding, while Mrs. Heathcote tried to play off Lucy on Dick. This was, however, quite hopeless. First, Dick did not like women to be gentle and soft. He liked a girl with a fine high temper of her own, and a will, like Grace; and, secondly, Lucy did not like Dick so much as Grace did. From her constant visits to old Ready-money, she found out, by the old man's frowns when Dick came to see him, that there was something he had done. Of course, she knew nothing positive; but she had strong suspicions that all was not quite right between the father and son. Her frequent absences in Derngate made matters even worse for Grace.

As for moving Farmer John out of his jog-trot ways, nothing could do that. He

was quite ready to help Frank with money or counsel — for the Heathcotes were very well-to-do; but he was not going to put himself out of the way, and hunt him up. Let Frank come to him. Frank did not go to him: made no sign; and Grace's heart began to fail her.

Village affairs lost their interest. The rheumatics of the old women found her callous: their complaints fell on cold ears. She went through the daily routine of her small duties without interest. When her mother, the day's business finished, about ten or eleven — they breakfasted at eight — took her seat for the day, she tried to escape to her own room, or to the garden. She could sometimes — when Silly Billy could be spared to blow the organ — take refuge in the church. Her mother disliked music in the morning, so she could not play. Her pony was lame, and she could not ride. Mrs. Heathcote never drove out, except to town: like most country ladies, thinking very little of the lovely foliage and shady lanes of her own shire.

Sometimes one of the Battiscombe girls staid with them — then they played croquet in the afternoon; Lord Launton very often finding something to say to Mr. Heathcote, which made it quite natural for him to stop and play with them till the dressing-bell rang at the Towers. It was curious that he found business which brought him to Parkside three or four times a week. He came in on any pretext, always about the same time, croquet time; staid as long as he could, and almost forgot his shyness. Dick Mortiboy at first made him shrink into his shell; but he managed to creep out again gradually, and came to like him. Dick took a fancy to the shy young fellow: talked to him; told him stories — Dick always had the readiest perception of what kind of story would suit his listener: this was one great secret of his popularity — and pleased the viscount by not deferring to him in the slightest degree because he was a lord.

So life went on; Grace sad and unhappy; her mother angry and disappointed; all playing at cross-purposes, as we always do; all acting a part to the world, as we always do; all putting a good face on things, as of course we must. And do not quarrel with Grace when you read her letters to Kate, because they seem bright and happy. I knew a man once who wrote the brightest, gayest, happiest letter, full of mirth and fun, and good spirits — a quarter of an hour before he blew out his brains. Letters mean nothing, except that they are sometimes a natural relief to the heart; and the effort of pleasing a friend gives you good spirits in spite of yourself.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"I MUST send you a piece of news, dearest Kate," wrote Grace, "before coming to what I have really to say; that is, my letter is to be a woman's letter, with all the important part at the end. The news is that Dick met Frank last week in London. The account of him is pretty good; for Dick, that is, who is a better story-teller than historian. That sounds like nonsense; but what I mean is, that he tells capital stories so long as he is allowed to draw upon the boundless fields of his own imagination, and keep to Texas; but when one wants exact descriptions of what really took place, one finds him sometimes a careless observer. This is a fault, perhaps common with your great geniuses. For my own part, I never invented any thing in all my life, and how people can write novels, goodness only knows! but I can always manage to tell exactly what I saw. The feminine eye, my dear, has a remarkable power of taking in every thing at a glance. I am sure you will own that no man ever yet was born — not even Robert Houdin — who could pass a woman in the street and be able to tell afterwards every thing she had on, from top to toe, and what it cost. You and I can do it, easily. That was just what I wanted to know about Frank. 'Tell me,' I said, 'what he looked like, and how he was dressed.' Well, you know, Dick was with him for eight long hours, and he can't tell me. He doesn't even know whether he wore gloves. He met Frank somewhere, and they went together to the University cricket match. After that they went and dined together of course, one cannot imagine men meeting without dining together. I begin to think that there must be some secret religious worship, a kind of stomachic freemasonry, connected with dinners; or else that eating, with men has a poetry about it which it fails to have for us. To-day, for instance, we had roast veal for dinner; but I am as prosaic after it as if it had been cold mutton. They dined together, Kate; and then they talked and smoked all the evening. Finally, Frank went away, half promising to call on Dick in the morning. *He never came.* All these details, I dare say, you know from Frank himself. What I wanted to learn exactly was how he looked, and if he was dressed properly; because I have often read in books that dress is a good rough test of prosperity; and if a man is doing well he always has a good pair of boots and a good coat. Don't be deceived by a bad hat, because the richest men sometimes have a bad hat. Poor Uncle

Richard's hat was always really beyond every thing. When a man begins to go down hill, it shows itself first in the heels of his boots, and next in his trousers. You would hardly believe that Dick, the man I believed so clever, never noticed Frank's boots at all. I made Lucy ask him the question, because I had asked after all the rest of his apparel, and Dick might have thought me inquisitive.

"'Boots?' asked Dick. 'I never looked at his boots.'

"And yet he calls himself an observant man!

"My dear Kate, I am so happy to have seen some one who has actually seen Frank, that I write all manner of nonsense. He was looking very well indeed, Dick declares. He was happy—had a pleasant day. Dick did hint at some sort of fight; but that must be an allegorical way of describing a pleasant day. Just like the Americans, when they go to see a great sight, say they are going to see the elephant; so my cousin, our cousin, Dick Mortiboy, when he wishes to convey the idea of perfect happiness, says he has had a fight. That is my theory, because I cannot believe that men can possibly feel any pleasure in banging each other about. Frank gave a happy and cheerful account of himself. Dick thinks that he is making money by art; or, at all events, because we hardly expect him to make money, that he is gradually getting work, and making a success for himself. The career of a man! Is it possible to be too ambitious? Lucy thinks that ambition means selfishness. She says that a man ought to follow what she calls the straight line of duty—look neither to right nor left, and be careless whether people praise him or not. I try to persuade her that all men are not clergymen. I like to have my clergyman really pious and disinterested—I suppose, because one never gets that kind of clergyman, just as I should like to have all sorts of impossible things in sealskin. A man—fancy, a man! came down here last winter with a long sealskin coat—real sealskin, mind—worth at least a hundred pounds. Now, that I call a wasting of good things. But about 'ambition. What I should like would be to see my husband distinguished: first in every thing; people looking after him; pictures of him in the shop windows; a portrait of him in the *Illustrated*; biographies of him; cartoons and even caricatures of him. This is my ambition for myself. I should be plain Mrs. —; it's bad luck to write your married name before you are married; look after his house, see that his dinner was always exactly what he liked, and endeavor

to find out what it is that men admire so much in different kinds of wine. Tell me you agree with me, Kate. But for a man not to be ambitious! If I had a husband not ambitious of doing something—of being first in his own circle, even—I would would stick pins in him till he was. Would not you? But Lucy, the dear child, has no ideas that are not founded on what poor Aunt Susan used to tell her. Aunt Susan! What would she have thought of her nephew, Dick? She was always talking to Lucy about him, always saying that she knew he was not dead, always praying for him, always telling of his good heart. How proud she would have been of him!

"Yes, Kate, Frank is well and happy. Of course he tells you he is; but it is really true, because Dick, who is unobservant about boots, would not be deceived in this. He laughs, he eats and drinks, he is well dressed, he is too proud to take any assistance; he is getting on in his profession; and, without telling Dick any thing, he asked after me ten times. Ten times, Kate! Always my own Frank—with the same bright face, and the same cheery voice. And now I know this, I've got an answer always ready, in case of little domestic storms, which you may guess.

"And now for the real thing in my letter. Kate, you are very wicked! You dare to make great successes, and to say nothing. You presume on our country ignorance. You knew that I should not go to town this season at all. You were afraid, perhaps, in your pride, that Dick would buy your picture: you were even too proud to have it exhibited in your own name. My dear, I am proud of you. Frank told Dick, who didn't think much about it—such is his Californian ignorance! and casually told papa, who didn't think much about it, because his lines have not been cast much among picture galleries. He casually told me. I jumped—I did, indeed. A picture in the Royal Academy! Actually accepted, and hung in a good place, and sold! O Kate! how proud you ought to be! And never to have told me a word about it. Working away in your little Welsh village in silence, without a soul to speak to; sending up your picture in a name that prevented the committee from knowing whether it was a man or a woman! Of course, if they had known your sex, they would have rejected you with ignominy, in pursuance of their grand plan of keeping Us down. My dear Kate, it was sublime. Now the academy is all over and done, and we have not even seen the picture. If we had known, of course we should have all gone to town—mamma,

and Lucy, and myself, and Cousin Dick, to see it. Dear Kate, I am so glad, so very glad! It must be the best consolation you have had since your troubles. Write and tell me you are happy about it; and *please*, don't keep secrets from me. I will guard your secrets so faithfully that not a soul shall know there is a secret. Tell me all your plans.

"Parkside is the same as ever. Somehow, we see more of Lord Launton than we used to. I wish he would not come in so often; for though he is very pleasant and all that, it is rather embarrassing if people come and find him there. We are partly his father's tenants, of course; but that is not a reason why he should come and play croquet with us. Then, we are not in a position to be invited to the Towers; and though he does not mean to be condescending, it is in some respects desirable, as mamma says, that he should not come. The worst of it is that we treat him, Lucy and I, as such an old friend, that we really do not take any notice of him, and quite ignore the fact that he is a real viscount. The other day, the Battiscombe girls were here. We had croquet, Cousin Dick, music, and a little dance. Lord Launton came in by chance, and staid with us. They—I mean the girls—were immensely jealous of us; and, I have not the least doubt, hate us both for being intimate with him. I am reminded of our gardener—you know him? I saw him one day last autumn, standing for two hours together admiring his chrysanthemums. Then I went out to him, because I thought he might catch cold. He waved an admiring hand at the flowers.

"Bless you, miss," he said in the grandest way, as if that was nothing to what he could do if he brought his mind to bear on it, 'I take no manner of pride in them.'

"That is what I say to Lucy about Lord Launton. Is it not rather humiliating to us that the earl allows him to come here so often? You see, he thinks that we are good, worthy people; and that papa, in whom he has the good sense to believe, is a most excellent person; and that we are all so deeply flattered by a visit from his son, that it is kindness to let him come as often as ever he likes. For my own part, I am going to take an early opportunity of speaking to Lord Launton seriously.

"I think Dick is recovering the ground he lost by his dreadful speech at the children's feast. The rector, good man, looks on him with eyes of suspicion, and so do the curates; but the people have taken his advice very much to heart; and, I believe, several *pères de famille* are seriously con-

templating the desirability of sending their sons away. They go down, and consult Mr. Mortiboy at the bank. Dick gets a lot of maps, and points out where they can emigrate to, and what it will cost. He never fails to lecture them on the folly of trying to make their sons 'gentlemen,' as they call it; that is, to put them into banks and lawyers' offices, so that they may wear a black coat. He still continues his unrighteous practice of giving weekly doles to old women. I think Mr. Ghymes instigates him to this. He tells us that he has dissolved partnership with his old friend, who has got all his Mexican estates. Those estates abroad do not seem to have weighed very much on his mind; and he confessed to me once that they were only valuable when a man of energy—meaning himself—was on the spot to superintend them. He showed me on the map where they were: put his thumb down, you know he has got an enormous thumb, and it covered a quarter of Mexico, about a hundred thousand square miles.

"There," he said, 'my estates are exactly there.'

"Thank you, Dick," I said. 'I am very much wiser than I was before.'

"Then he laughed, and began to talk about something else.

"Whenever I write to you, I tell about Dick. I do not know how it is, except that he really does occupy our minds and our talk a good deal. What he did last, what he is going to do next, if he has committed any outrage on the Church or conventionalities in general—this is chiefly what we talk about. I like him better every day. I think he is getting softened, and more companionable. He has left off the use of strange expressions in unknown languages. He has begun to dress more like an ordinary Christian. He falls in with our ways and habits of thought. In time, I hope we shall make him a steady, respectable member of society. What I try to teach him is, that we may be altogether wrong, but that we are all wrong together—only the division of a word, you see, and it is very disagreeable not to be like other people. We had a talk the other day about things.

"You go to church because it is respectable," he said.

"Well, and what if we do? Going to church is good for people. If the well-to-do people did not go, the poor would not. And without church, they would have no weekly lesson in good manners, to say nothing of higher things.'

"You subscribe a million a year to convert the niggers. You send out people you call missionaries, who live in comfortable

houses, and bully and bribe the natives. I've seen them.'

"Of course, if you've seen them bullying and bribing the natives, I can say nothing. There you have an advantage over us.'

"All the time, you've got all your paupers at home starving, and going from bad to worse.'

"What are we to do, Dick? People give because they think it is right. The missionaries may be bad men, but the object is good. The societies may be badly managed, but their aim is a good one.'

"Your charities make the people paupers; your Church helps to make them hypocrites; your poor laws make them slaves; your trading interests grind them into the dust."

"My dear cousin,' I said, 'don't say *your* in such a personal way. I really should be very glad if things were better. Tell me what I am to do. As for you, you have wealth; you, at least, can do something.'

"I intend to,' he said. 'I am going to look about for a while, and then I shall start something.'

"O Kate, that 'something'! When Dick appears in his character of social reformer, introducing his 'something' I tremble for all our notions. His ideas of society are primitive and radical. Only, as he tells papa, he can't do any harm, because not five per cent. have got the pluck to think for themselves.

"I run on when I write to you, till I hardly know when to stop. I tell you every thing. Don't you think people exchange their ideas and show their hearts better on paper than in words? I sit in my own room alone, after dinner, and write like this, till I have exhausted every thing that was in my head. I wonder if you really like to read my letters. Then I sit back and read it all over again, and try to ascertain, by a calm, critical perusal, whether it is worth reading. Sometimes I say, 'Kate will laugh at this'; 'This is well put, young woman'; and so on—like a friendly critic, just to encourage myself.

"I have just read the whole letter through again. Kate, it is much too full of Cousin Dick. That is not my fault: it is the fault of his being always here. It is also much too full of myself. It is I, I, I—all *Is*, like the prophet's creature, that he saw in his vision. I must correct this fault in my next, and make it all U, U, U, in compensation, like a churchyard orchard. You know, Kate, I should like to make it all F, F, F—ective. Ah, me! if it were not for hope, I should die. Suppose we go

on for years and years and years. How would it be, do you think, when we are both past sixty, to fulfil our troth and marry? Dreadful thought! Love belongs to youth. If Frank cannot marry me when I am young, and when he can kiss me and fondle me for the sake of *mes beaux yeux*, let him not marry me at all. I would rather remain single for *his sake*. Would not you, Kate? Oh! to wait, and wait—his plighted word holding true—till my cheeks are withered and my beauty all gone, and there is nothing to remind him of the Grace he used to love: and then to feel that all the passion was dead, and nothing left but the smouldering ashes of duty! Let me marry my Frank when I am young and fair, or let me never marry at all. Farewell, dear Kate. Tell him from me—oh! what message can I send him? You are the kindest sister-in-law that ever poor girl was *going* to have. Tell him, in any guarded way that you like—not in so many words, because it is immodest and unwomanly, only it is true—that I love him—I love him—I love him; and that there can never be more than one man in all the world to me.

"Your own GRACE."

The foregoing very silly and young-ladyish effusion—over which I do hope my readers will not linger till they become critical—may be read by the light of the preceding chapter.

Those who are too captious about girls' letters will remark that there is no postscript at all in it.

CHAPTER XXXV.

AFTER living three or four weeks at Mrs. Skimp's, Frank made up his mind to shift his quarters. Great joy, accordingly, fell upon the inmates of the boarding-house in Granville Square, in whose opinion Mr. Melliship gave himself unbecoming airs, nobody except old Bowker and half-witted Eddrup being good enough company for him.

"After all, what was he?" they asked scornfully. "A singer at a music hall!"

Capt. Bowker, who had never before found such a listener as Frank, was most unfeignedly sorry to see the only person in the place with an ear for poetry depart. Besides, the old fellow liked Frank, and so begged him to come and spend Sunday evening with him, when the others were generally out. This Frank promised to do when he could, to the captain's great relief.

The first day after he left, one or two of Mrs. Skimp's gentlemen so far plucked up courage again as to begin their persecution of old Mr. Eddrup as of old. But he had a friend in the old sailor, who, taught by Frank's example, confronted his assailants with so angry a visage, and language of such briny flavor, that they reluctantly gave up their fun.

So at Mrs. Skimp's table, Frank's memory was kept green by the captain; and the good he had effected in Mr. Eddrup's behalf was not allowed to perish.

As Mr. Leweson had sent him to Skimp's, when Frank made up his mind to leave there, he mentioned the matter to him.

"You might lodge with the Silvers. They have room for somebody with them, I know," Mr. Leweson said, regretting next moment that he had suggested it, foreboding disturbance to Patty's peace of mind.

Frank offered to become the occupant of Mr. Silver's two vacant rooms, and was accepted without demur.

He was heartily glad to escape from the noise and coarseness of Skimp's to a room of his own, where, at least, he could be alone.

Patty Silver had furnished the first floor—left empty by their last tenant—for him, not magnificently, it is true, but as well as the slender funds of the family permitted. He had a bed, and, in his sitting-room, a carpet and a table, and as many chairs as he could expect for twelve shillings a week.

Patty cooked his dinner for him; and, before he went to the palace, he took a cup of tea with the Silvan Family; then after he had sung his three songs, and borne the applause, which humiliated him more than singing the songs, he smoked a pipe in Mr. Silver's company before he went to bed; but as he smoked and listened, or replied in monosyllables to the prophetic discourse of the acrobat—who never talked on any subject but one—his thoughts were miles away in the past or in the future.

"The future!" he used to think, after his nightly purgatory. "How long shall I go on with it? And what next?"

He had the pleasure of sending something weekly to his mother and sister. He had the pleasure weekly of hearing of them and of Grace. But he could not continue to sing at the palace after his engagement was over. It was but the shift of a penniless man. All day he lived in terror lest some old friend should see him, and proclaim his disgrace, as he thought it.

Night after night he searched the sea of

faces for one he knew. He never saw one. The palace is not a place where country cousins go. The "loonatics" who patronized Mr. Leweson were all of Islington blood: unmixed cockneys; city clerks, dressed *à la mode*; young shopmen, making half-a-crown purchase nearly as much dissipation as a sovereign will buy in the west; with a good sprinkling of honest citizens, fond of an evening out, neither they nor their wives averse to the smell of tobacco and taste of beer. But no face he knew. He was as safe from discovery, under the cover of Signor Cipriano, at the palace as he would have been in San Francisco.

Still he resolved not to stay with Mr. Leweson after the two months' engagement had expired.

When he told him, Mr. Leweson sighed.

"I thought so—I always thought so. You are too good for my loonatics. Now I shall begin to advertise your last nights."

The posters came out. "Last Night of Signor Cipriano!" in flaring capitals, stared Frank in the face from every hoarding round Islington. His fame went up by means of the bills to the breezy heights of Hampstead, to hilly Highgate, to the woods of Hornsey, and to far-off Finchley.

At his lodgings, Frank did not see very much of Patty. At tea time and in the evening they met; but the girl hardly spoke. She left the talking to her father, who poured out a never-ending stream of commentary. Frank, as he listened, learned what strange shapes religion sometimes takes in a mind uneducated, but enthusiastic, simple, and imaginative.

Mr. Silver had but one desire—to spiritualize himself to the utmost. He cared nothing what he ate and drank, except that it must be sufficient to maintain his strength. He was indifferent to his calling, come failure or come success; save that he recognized the duty of doing his best in it. He had no fears for the future, either for himself or his children, in whom he thought he saw the "Light." A man indifferent to the world, utterly selfish, utterly *un-careful*. That his daughter should perform on the bars with himself seemed to him a matter so simple, after all the practice they had had together, that he never thought about it at all: and his own conscience being satisfied, he cared absolutely nothing about the opinion of the world.

It pleased him to have Frank with him. First, because he could talk. Talk with a man who disputes and argues is a great deal more refreshing than talk with one who accepts undoubtingly, as Patty and her brother used to do. Then Frank was cheery; he kept the children, as Mr. Silver called both Patty and Joe, alive and happy

—told them stories, and made them laugh. The prophet, as Frank called him, had no objection to seeing people laugh; his religion was not a gloomy one.

I have shown how Frank sketched a portrait of Mr. Silver. But in three days after he moved into his new lodgings, he renewed his proposition to draw a portrait of Patty.

"Vanity," said the prophet, with a smile.

"You were pleased with yours, father," urged his daughter.

"Draw her if you like, Mr. Melliship."

They had a sitting that very afternoon, in Frank's sitting-room. His easel, the table; his canvas, a large piece of rough drawing paper; his materials, chalks. He was going to draw her life-size. Mr. Silver thought there was going to be made a pencil sketch in a dozen touches, like that of himself.

Frank engaged the girl to silence, and worked away for a few mornings with a will. He only put in her head, as she refused to have her hands drawn. The poor girl was very sensitive about her disfigured hands. The likeness was perfect; but he permitted himself, with the license of an artist, to add a few accessories. Her hair was dressed, and crowned with flowers; jewels were round her neck. She was no longer Patty the acrobat, but a countess, a queen dressed for conquest. The picture conquered Patty. Ever since Frank caught her in his arms, and saved her from death, the image of the fair-haired, sweet-spoken young man, the only gentleman she had ever spoken to, the only gentleman who had ever spoken to her, filled her foolish little brain. He came to tea with them; he came and lived with them; brought brightness into a house which had almost too much of Ezekiel about it. Then he brought flowers every day for her, because she liked flowers; he bought ribbons for her, because she liked a little finery, and gloves, because her own pair were old and dirty. He paid her little attentions, meaning nothing, though she thought they meant a good deal. And so, like Margaret, — type of every innocent and ignorant girl, — she asked herself a dozen times a day, "He loves me — loves me not?" He loved her not; he hardly gave her a thought, save that she was nice, pleasant to look at, pleasant to talk to. But love!

Sometimes in the mornings, when there was no rehearsal, he went for walks with her, starting early, and going up to Highgate and beyond — where there are fields and wild flowers still to be had, though London is so near. The boy went with them; but Patty had the pleasure of talking to Frank, telling him all her little

hopes; for the girl was as confiding as innocence could make her, save when her own secret was concerned.

The portrait was framed, and hung in the room where the family ate and drank and sat. This, in spite of protests from the father, who soon, however, got into the habit of looking at the portrait of his daughter. As he looked, he said, the likeness disappeared.

One day, after gazing steadily at the picture for a long time, he exclaimed, —

"I have it now. It is no longer the portrait of my daughter — it is the picture of the daughter of Jephthah."

Frank looked at his handiwork. It was, in a sense, true. Patty's features; but somehow there was in her eyes, what he had never noticed before, a look of expectancy, as of suffering to come — the tale of lamentation and sacrifice foreshadowed in her gaze. It was wonderful. His hands had done it all unawares; but it was there.

"It might stand for the daughter of Jephthah," he murmured; "but Patty's face is too bright. See, Mr. Silver," he said, as Patty looked up from her work, "there is no sadness there. You don't see any sacrifice in Patty's eyes, do you?"

Patty blushed as her father looked first at her, and then at the picture.

"It is there; the expression is there — the look of Jephthah's daughter — as well as in the portrait."

He relapsed into one of his trances, becoming now more frequent, and was silent.

Patty's face, to an outsider, certainly offered as few indications of future sorrow as many girls'. The dimples in her cheeks showed how prone she was, by original sin, to light-heartedness and gayety; the clearly defined arch of her eyebrows, her clustering chestnut hair, the deep brown of her eyes, the freshness of her cheeks, pointed her out as one destined to be loved. But to all this Frank was blind. He had only one love — only one ideal of womanhood.

Blind! Blind!

For they were together during these weeks; and day after day, Patty was drinking new draughts of intoxication and of passion. She looked at herself in the glass more than she had ever done before; she put on the little bright bits of color which Frank had bought her in the shape of ribbons; she ashamed over her hands; she began to be ashamed of her work. More than all, she began to be ashamed of her professional costume. She rejoiced that her performances began when Frank's were finished, and that he did not see them; she thought little of the thousands of eyes that did. All these were nothing. What did it matter what she did before the stupid pub-

He who came to see her fly through the air, and perhaps kill herself?

"He loves me — loves me not?" He is a gentleman, delicately nurtured. He cannot bear rough, coarse hands, pulled out of shape by hard, unwomanly work. He loves women with accomplishments, who can write without having to think how to spell the words. He loves women who can dress in silk and satin, and put on all manner of bravery. He has some one in that upper world to which he belongs — some one whom he loves."

Or she would awake, fresh and hopeful, and radiant as the rosy-fingered dawn.

"He talked to me all day yesterday. He brought me flowers and fruit. He laughed at what I said, and called me silly. He admired my bonnet. He loves me! He loves me!"

So the little tragedy went on; the girl trying to think that Frank loved her; the little heart beating with all the nameless hopes and fears; the eyes that watched for a sign, only the smallest sign, of love; the ears that listened for the least little vibration of passion; the cheeks that flushed when he drew near, and flushed again when he went away. And Frank and her father, callous to it all, ignorant of it, unsuspecting; each thinking of the thing that interested him most; Frank burning to get through his two months' engagement, the prophet finding ever fresh food for his mystic imagination.

"Patty," said Frank, one morning, "one thing always astonishes me about you. Where are your lovers? What are all the young fellows thinking of?"

She flushed scarlet. Her lovers? Alas! she had but one, and he did not love her. And only this morning she had risen so full of hope and joy, because Frank had spoken to her the day before more kindly, as she thought, than usual.

"Lovers!" she echoed sharply. "I have none; I want none."

And went straightway to her own room, where she sobbed her eyes out.

Frank looked after her in some surprise. He had never known Patty in a temper before.

He went out to see Mr. Eddrup, knowing by this time where to find him in the morning.

Mr. Eddrup was in his court — the court which now, save one or two houses, belonged to him. It was his. In it he had organized a sort of parish, of which he was the sole minister and vicar in charge; for the parish had given it up in despair. Here he had a school; here was a chapel; here were a wash-house and baths; here, in itself complete, all the things that go to soften

and ameliorate the lot of poverty. And here, for forty years, he had spent his days and nights; a long self-sacrifice, more complete than that of the hermits of the Thebaid, perhaps with more suffering. Here he had spent every farthing that could be snatched from the expenses of his meagre life — the money that should have clothed him well, that might have procured him comfort, and even luxury — that might have given him a position in the world. And not the money only. That was nothing. But his youth, his pride, his ambition, his passion, his dreams of love and visions of fair women — all, all were merged and sunk in this little court of twenty houses, which he found a den of thieves and had turned into a house of prayer. Seventy years of age now — an old man bowed and bent, but full of zeal and energy — he went to and fro among his people. They were always sinning, and always being punished, because the poor get punished in this world more than the rich. They were always in distress, out of work, out of health, behind with every thing; and they looked to him for every thing — for help, advice, consolation. He gave them what he had. For money; he lent it, at no interest. They paid him back when they were able. Advice, consolation, experience, he gave them for nothing. It was his *metier* to give.

Not to give money: that was not his rule. Not to pauperize the people. To avoid the mistakes of the Church; to make people provident; to help them in their efforts; to trust in their honesty, and to make them honest by trusting them. To teach especially the things that belong to poor people: the virtues, not of obedience and contentment, which are servile virtues, but of moderation, cleanliness, and good temper. This was his method. He neither wrote nor agitated; but found a little spot in this great London, and set himself to improve it. Presently, as it became improved, came the necessity for religion. Then he made himself their leader, and held services for prayer and praise, where every one might speak the thing that was in him. The people respected themselves; they respected their friend and teacher more.

Frank found him at the entrance of the court, preparing to slip away, in his noiseless and shy way, along the streets to Skimp's, in Granville Square. Frank offered him his arm, and walked with him. The old man was very silent, as usual.

It was not by any means their first meeting in this way. Once or twice a week Frank came round to the court at three o'clock, the time when Mr. Eddrup's work was generally over, and walked home with

him. They seldom talked much; but the old man's heart had warmed to Frank. He was the only one, for forty years, who had brought his youth and cheerfulness across his path; the only gentleman — and Mr. Eddrup's heart still warmed to gentlemen — who had crossed his weary path; always excepting Capt. Hamilton and the medical students of Skimp's.

To-day, he said not a word till they reached the door of Skimp's.

"You asked me, some time since," he began abruptly, pausing with the latch-key in his hand, "why I live this life. Come in, and I will tell you."

There was no one in the drawing-room. Mr. Eddrup sat down at the open window, and passed his hand across his brow.

"Forty years," he murmured — "forty years. I am like the children of Israel in the wilderness. It is a long time; but it will soon be over. A few more months, or days, and my work will be done. Mr. Melliship, you have told me your story. It is a sad one — it is a very sad one; but you have one consideration — the greatest; it is not your fault that you are poor. You can look the world in the face, and laugh at it, because you are innocent. I asked you to look at my forehead. Look again. Is there not the seal of guilt upon it? The mark of Cain? Look close. Do not think to spare me."

He threw back his long white locks with a gesture of despair.

"I see nothing," said Frank, "but the reverend white hairs of a good man."

Mr. Eddrup sighed.

"I will tell you. I knew I must tell it before I died," he said. "I don't ask you to keep my secret. All the world may know it again, as they did before. I shall some day — soon — tell my people: whenever I feel strong enough, I mean," he said, correcting himself hastily, "whenever I feel less cowardly, and able to do so. Mr. Melliship, I am nothing better than a convicted thief! You shrink — you shrink from me. See how quickly the veil of reputation drops off!"

"Mr. Eddrup, I did not shrink. . . . What you have been matters not. The thing is, what you are."

"What I am! what I am!" he repeated. "What am I? A hypocrite, who wears a mask; a man who goes about the world under false pretences. See — see this; read it."

He took from his pocket-book part of a worn newspaper, yellow with age, ragged at the edges. An old "Times," dated July the 8th, 1825. Frank half opened it, and then gave it back.

"I don't want to read it. Why should

I? Mr. Eddrup, you who preach of faith and charity, have you forgotten hope?"

"It is more than forty years ago. I was poor. I was burning with zeal and ambition. I longed to distinguish myself. I had talents — not great talents, but some ability; but I was too poor to make myself known. I wanted to go into the world, and get friends. Then a terrible temptation assailed me. I was beset with it night and day. I had no rest. The voice of the tempter woke me at night, and kept me feverish all the day. It said, 'Use it, use it; no one will know. Presently you will have money, and you will replace it.' Trust money! I waited, and listened to the tempting voice. The years passed by. I was nearly thirty. I used it. It is forty years ago; but even now the memory of that day, and the misery I felt when my self-respect was gone, haunts me till I know not whether it is repentance or the gnawing of the worm that never dies. I used the money — for my own purposes."

Great beads stood upon his forehead as he made his confession. He was silent again for a space.

Frank held his breath.

"After a year, they found it out. I had not yet been able to replace the money. They arrested me. It made some noise. They tried to get me off; but it was all too clear. I had six months' imprisonment, and came out into a world which was dark to me for the future. I was poor when I became a felon: I was rich when I came out of prison. One of my relatives had died, leaving me all his money, having forgotten, I believe, to alter his will. I paid back the money I had stolen. I hid myself for a year, in despair and misery, creeping out at night. What should I do with my life? I thought that I would bury myself in solitude, and try to do some secret good: not in atonement, young man, remember — I never thought that. Nothing that man can do will ever atone. The evil remains. It is his misery sometimes to see the evil that he has begun work its steady way upward, like a tree that he has planted. Sometimes, if he does not see it, he feels it."

"Is repentance nothing? Is a life of good works nothing?"

Mr. Eddrup shook his head.

"What I never shake off from myself is the feeling that one *never forgets*. I want an assurance of a river of Lethe. I want, not to be forgiven, so much as to forget; not so much to escape punishment, as to hold up my head again. Punishment, pain, suffering — what does it mean? Nothing, nothing. But self-respect. Can, will, Heaven give back that? Preachers tell us of sins for-

given: they say nothing of honor restored. A heaven of praise, with my brother sinners, because we have escaped punishment, would be no heaven for me. I want more. It is the assurance of that perfect forgiveness which restores as well as pardons that I want. Young man, pray, night and morning, and all day long, that you may not be led into temptation."

He dropped his face into his hands; and Frank, meek and silent before this revelation and sorrow, slipped quietly away, and left him.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE summer passes into autumn: the woods of Hunslope Park are tinged with yellow. Dick Mortiboy, leaving Lafleur to work out the System alone, lingers at his villa. He has bought horses and traps: he rides about the country; he knows every village and nearly every man in it; for miles round Market Basing; he gives dinners to his tenants; receives all his clients, from Lord Hunslope downwards, with the same affability; throws away his money—the Mortiboy money, gotten with so much labor and pains—with an easy prodigality endearing him to all that large class of mankind which admires generosity when it flows towards itself. But for one thing, his popularity would be perfect. Dick will go to no private parties. They lay traps for him; publicly invite him to dinner; catch him by the button-hole, and try to inveigle him into an engagement; lead him to the doors of their houses, and almost drag him in. But Dick won't go. One house alone he frequents: his cousins', the Heathcotes'. Is he paying attention to one of the girls? A serious question to the ladies of Market Basing. If so, it must be Grace, that designing young girl who used to flirt with Frank Melliship, and threw him over when he was ruined. It can't be Lucy, who hasn't spirit enough even to look in the face of a man. He may be paying his attentions to one of the girls, but it is difficult to tell which.

And all this time Dick is fighting a battle with himself. He went at first to Parkside because he liked to talk freely; and it was the only house, he thought, in his ignorance of the world, where people would not laugh at his rough speech. Fancy the world presuming to laugh at a man with half a million and more of money! He goes now, though he knows he ought not, because he likes to go there only too well. He has never dared, strong and brave as he is, to meet his thought face to face;

but secretly there is growing up within him a passionate desire to be free "in sin" of the yoke of Polly, and to seize for his own his Cousin Grace. He is beginning to bend it down this growing passion.

Grace, meantime, unconscious of his altered feelings, treats him with the same perfect freedom she might show to her own brother. But her mother was right—Dick Mortiboy loved her.

"I do wonder, Dick," she said one morning,—"how we should have managed to get on without you. What a good fellow you were to come some day, as I tell you, at the time when you were most wanted, when we should have been left a family. I think we shall call you in often. Always give us all of some of your sad stories. Don't you think he's increased, Lucy? Would have some use in the world, Dick, however you may despise them."

"I don't despise them."

"They please me, and please Jane, the housekeeper, please the ladies—when they hear themselves praised for a cousin Dick. I don't know what is the punishment that."

They went out for drives in his gig, and Grace in front, Lucy behind. Then he sat next and let Grace praise him. Or they went on for long rides with him, and were then to wonder that Dick rode better even than Frank.

"Are you ever happy?" he asked once in an abrupt way.

"Why Dick?"

"I can't make it out. You had such quiet lives. You never go away anywhere. You see no strange faces, you have no excitement, you know nothing. I hardly can, in life."

"Perhaps we live quiet, Cousin Dick," said Lucy.

"No, we don't, Dick," said Grace. "What we are troubled from our infancy is to be content with quiet lives, because we shall never get any thing else. I should like to go about the world and see things. I should like to have a little story—just a little, you know—to tell about afterwards. And I should like to see the beautiful places in the world that you talk about."

"I don't know," said Lucy; "I have been here most of my life. I have seen all sorts of things. We are happy, are we not, Grace?"—examining her sister, whose consciousness was so different from her own.

"Happy? Yes, I suppose so. Don't you know, Cousin Dick, that it is always prudent to estimate your wishes against the probability of their accomplishment? That seems a very wise thing to say; but I saw it in a book the other day. The learned

author went on to remark, that if you wisely wished for what was most likely to happen to you, and prayed night and morning for it to come, you would in all probability, and provided you had faith enough, get what you prayed for."

"Grace, dear, don't."

But Grace went on.

"As for me, I'm not so happy as I should like to be. Not because my life is dull; but—oh! quite another thing—because, you see, I am wishing and praying for what does not come. That is the only change I want. And, oh dear! it is a terrible great change to ask. Are you happy, Dick?"

"Pretty well. There are one or two things that bother me as I lie in my hammock at night."

"You would like poor Uncle Richard to get well again," said Lucy.

"No, that is not one of them. Of course I should, Lucy. But that is not one of them."

"Can we help you, Dick?" said Grace.

"No; I hardly think you can. But let me help you, if I may."

"Some day, Dick, I mean to ask you, perhaps."

She held out her hand frankly. At the touch of her slender fingers, the great, solid-looking man fairly trembled and shook. But Grace was gone, and he turned moodily away.

Was he paying attention? Was he in love with his cousin? Was he letting the thought of her dwell in his mind day after day, till it became a power almost too great to be resisted?

About two miles from Market Basing stands, on a small eminence, a cross—one of the crosses erected by Edward the First in honor of Queen Eleanor. It is placed at the side of the road, and, standing on its steps, you have a wide and very pretty view of Market Basing, and the surrounding meadows. On a platform of red sandstone, in seven steps, is the cross itself, about forty feet high. The lowest part is octagonal, bearing on its sides, much defaced, the arms of Castille and Leon, and Ponthien in Picardy. Above this is another small tower of twelve feet. Every other side of this tower contains a crowned female figure, defaced, but not yet destroyed by time. This is surmounted by a small four-sided tower, on which is a marble cross, formerly gilt. It had been old Mr. Mortiboy's favorite drive. He would get down from John Heathcote's dogcart—for it was on the road to Parkside—and, leaving him standing in the road, would climb the steps and contemplate the town and his property lying beneath him. When he was a

younger man, he used to walk out and back.

Dick, one afternoon in September, was driving Grace Heathcote home in his dogcart. She had come to town with her father, who had business to detain him later.

As they passed the cross, Grace pointed it out to him.

"Your father used to be so fond of standing on the steps, and looking at the town, Dick. Let us get down and see the view. You can count your houses with your finger, as he used to do."

"I don't much care for views, and I don't want to count my houses," said Dick; "but you always have your own way."

"There is no use in being a woman unless you have it, is there?"

"Lead the horse to the top of the hill, walk him down, and wait for us, Bob."

They stood on the steps of the old cross: Grace on the top step, and Dick one or two steps lower.

"Look, Dick, look; is it not beautiful?"

A beautiful landscape of peace and plenty, lit up with an autumn sun, can make things beautiful. Dick turned for a moment to the scene, but his eyes went back to Grace. The girl touched him on the shoulder, and bade him look for his own house. A second time, at her touch, Dick trembled and shivered. For she had never looked so lovely.

"Don't, Grace," he said, in a constrained voice. He was exerting all his strength to prevent himself from taking the slight and delicate figure in his arms, and crushing it to his heart. "Don't, Grace. Don't touch me."

"Why not, Dick?"

"Because I love you, Grace. Because I cannot bear it any longer."

The girl shrank back in momentary dread. For his eyes were fixed on her, and had a hungry, yearning look, a wild look.

They heard no sound in the air, save the song of a lark above them, and the crunching of the gravel made by the horse's hoofs and the wheels of the dogcart. Another sound there was: but they were both deaf: the sound of voices—a woman's voice.

"Where's your master, Bob?"

"Nigh the cross, with Miss Grace."

Bob went on; and the woman, stepping on the grass by the wayside, noiselessly went on till she came to the cross. Then she slipped behind it, and listened.

"I love you, Grace," Dick went on. "I tell you I have fought against it, because Lucy told me something—I half forget. There is another. What do I care about any other man? There is no man in the world I am afraid of."

"Do you think women are to be fought for, Dick? You are not in Texas now."

"Forgive me. I'm only a common and a rough man, Grace, my—my darling." She shrank farther back. The woman behind gave a little hiss, and clenched her fists. "I'm not fit to speak to a girl like you. If you knew all, you would say so yourself. But I can't help myself, Grace. I swear I can't help myself. Look here: if you touch me, I shake all over. Yet I am not happy except I am near you. If you speak to me, I tingle with pleasure. If you knew, Grace—if you only knew, what a wild beast is in me now, telling me to take you in my arms, and kiss, and kiss, and kiss you again, you would run away shrieking."

"I'm not afraid of you, Cousin Dick."

But she was.

"The devil and all of it is, you see, Grace," he went on after a pause, during which he was wrestling with and getting the better of his wild beast—"the devil of it is—I'm glad, after all, that I have told you, because now things will be easier—that I could not even ask you to marry me."

"You know, Dick, that it would be useless if you could."

"I know. The other—boy—Frank—Melliship—I know."

He sat down on the lower step, and crunched his heel into the grass.

"If you knew all, I said, yes, if you knew all, I think you would—pity—me, Grace. If I could only find something to say that would make you love me! If I could only make you understand—only I can't talk as some men can—how I long for you, how I curse the—the cause that keeps me from hoping ever to marry you."

"Dick, I never—never could marry you."

"But I should have a chance—at least, I should think so—if it were not for her, Grace." He started to his feet, and stretched out his arms to her wildly. "Grace, what does all the world matter, and what they think or say? See, I love you, I will fight for you, and—and worship you all my life. I am rich, I will give you any thing that you like to ask. The world over there is far more beautiful than here. Come away with me. We will build a house in California, in a spot I like well. The sun is always bright there. Grace, come with me. I am a man; I am not a puny strippling like Frank Melliship. Men know me, and are afraid of me. But I—I, my girl, am afraid of no man in the world—no man. Roaring Dick is king wherever he goes!"

He was mad with passion. His eyes were aglow with a strange fire, his voice was harsh and hoarse. He made a movement towards the shrinking and terri-

fied girl, with outstretched arms. Grace shrieked, and fell back against the cross.

Then between them stepped the listening woman.

"No," she cried, "no, Grace Heathcote: leave me my husband, at least. Take his rings and his presents, hear his fine speeches—you may have them; but you shan't have him. Not that, not that. Leave him to me. He is mine, mine: my handsome Dick. You think you will get away from your Polly. Not you, my lad, not you. Not yet, not yet."

She had been drinking: her face was flushed and red, she wore a coarse country dress, she was frowzy and heated, her voice was thick. Good heavens! what a contrast to the sweet and delicate girl who stood above her on the steps, white and frightened.

"Pretty things for a wife to hear; very pretty things, upon my word; and as for you, you young minx"—

Here Dick laid his heavy hand on her shoulder, and swung her round. She looked up at him, in her rage and fury, with parted lips and flaming cheeks. Her husband was pale and calm, save for the trembling of his lips.

His eyes met hers.

You know how, in the *Festin de St. Pierre*, the statue of the Commandant lays his irresistible hand upon the shoulder of Don Juan. At its cold touch, the bravado and courage go out of the man. As it weighs him down, he sinks lower and lower till the earth closes over him.

At the first touch of Dick's hand, Polly trembled. When he turned her round, and she read, not wrath, but a cold pitiless determination in his face, her rage died out suddenly, and she became cold all over. She dropped her eyes. He looked at her steadily for a few moments, and then said, in a husky voice,—

"Go away from this, Polly. Keep out of my way—you'd best—for the present."

The woman went on her way without a word.

Grace sat down, and buried her face in her hands. She forgot her own terror in her sorrow for Dick. Across his face had flashed, for a moment only, a look of misery and shame that cut her to the heart.

"O Cousin Dick, Cousin Dick," she cried, bursting into tears, "I am so sorry!"

"Forgive me, Grace," he said quietly. "Forgive me. I get mad sometimes, you know. I was mad then. Tell me you forgive me."

She held out her hand. In truth, she had never caught the meaning of his words. How should she know what they meant?

He took her hand in his, and kept it.

"I was only nineteen when I married her. Even then there was no excuse for me. But she made me do it. I took her up to London, when my father sent me to work at our town agent's. We were married in St. Pancras Church. Then I left home, was turned out by my father, — all my fault, Grace, not his, remember that, — and I left her. Till the time I came home again, I never thought of her. Now I have to pay her to keep silence. Pity me, Grace."

"I do pity you, Dick; I pity you from my heart."

"I said what I ought not, my child. I said I loved you. That is true. You will always remember that I loved you, will you not? As long as I live, I shall love you. But you may trust me, Grace. I shall never offend you again. For I can never ask you to marry me."

"And, O Dick, O Cousin Dick! you won't try to do any harm to Frank?"

"Frank Melliship? I'm not the man, Grace. Marry whom you like. I will help you, that is, if I can."

She laid her hand in his once more. He looked down at her: the passion faded out of his deep black eyes — eyes now soft and tender as a woman's.

"Go, Grace. Keep my secret. I must stay here a while and think. Go home without me, my child."

"I am afraid — of her, Dick."

"She *dares* not touch you. By — ! " — he clenched his fist. "But I will walk with you to the top of the hill, and see you safe with Bob."

"Good-by, Dick. Don't do any thing dreadful. Oh, I am so afraid you should!" Then she added, almost in a whisper, "Don't be cruel to her."

They parted: she with a heart full of new and strange sympathies and sorrows; he subdued and heavy-laden.

He pulled out his cigar-case, and smoked for above an hour, sitting on the steps of the old cross. Then the sun got low, and he got up and walked homewards.

At the foot of the rising ground on which the cross stands, runs the river which winds down the plain, and flows between his father's house in Derngate and his own little villa. He took the towing-path, and followed it moodily. It was a very lonely path; few people walked there by day, and none by night. The barges have all left it long since, and the deserted stream flows along broad and deep, between the trees which overhang it on either side.

Presently, before him in the path, he saw his wife. She had been drinking again, since he sent her away, to drown her fears; and now she stood in the way before him,

facing him, with her arms akimbo, and a loud, defiant laugh.

"So you've done your fine talk with Grace Heathcote at last, and now you're coming to beg my pardon, I suppose."

Dick grew purple with passion. He seized her by the waist in his mighty arms, and, without saying a single word, raised her aloft, and threw her — heavy as she was — six feet and more into the river. With a shriek, the woman fell into the deepest part of the stream, and disappeared.

Dick's wrath, when there was no opposition to feed it, was as short-lived as a straw-fire. He looked at the rings of water widening round the spot where Polly had fallen in, with an expression which rapidly changed from extreme rage to one more like extreme vexation,

"Carambol!" he cried, "what if I've drowned her?"

But he might have spared himself his anxiety. The cold water sobered her in a moment; and rising from the mud at the bottom, into which her head had at first plunged, she came to the surface. Ten feet lower down, a fallen tree lay half across the stream. The current bore her on before she had time to sink again. She clutched at the branches, which bent and ducked her again and again. But at last she landed herself, and clambering up the bank, wet and dripping, turned in fury upon her lord and master.

Dick was sitting on the grass, laughing as if it was the best joke he had ever known in his life.

"I told you how it would be, Polly, if you split. Now you see. Lord! if you could only get a sight of your own face!"

She had risen from the waves, like Venus Anadyomene. Encumbered as she was with her draggled clothes, she only resembled the goddess in that one fact. Besides the mud at the bottom, which was still in her hair and bonnet, she had collected a goodly quantity of duckweed on her way out of the water, which hung in graceful festoons upon her shoulders.

"You'd better go home to your mother and get dry, Polly."

"I'll cry all over Market Basing that I'm your wife. I'll have revenge, you black, murdering villain. I'll have my rights out of you, I will."

"Then, Polly, perhaps next time you go into the river, you will stay there."

Dick strode off alone, leaving his wife on the other side.

When he got home, he bolted the door, so that her key was of no use. About ten o'clock, a little gravel was thrown up at his window. It was Polly, crying, —

"Dick, let me in; let me in, Dick. I'm

very sorry, and I haven't told nobody; on my sacred word, I haven't. I said I'd been a blackberryin', and fell in."

Dick poked an unrelenting head out of the window. At the sight of it, his wife put her handkerchief to her face and sobbed loudly.

"Polly," said the inhuman Dick, "you may go to the devil."

Polly went home. She arose early next morning, and repaired again, trembling, to the house; but she might just as well have gone defiantly, for Dick Mortiboy was off to town by the six o'clock train.

CHAPTER XXXII.

FOLLOW me, as the old novelists used to say, to Paragon Place, Gray's Inn Road. This pleasant retreat lies on the east side of the road, not very far from the lordly entrance to Gray's Inn. Paragon Place is a *cul de sac*; and as it consists only of six houses in all, it passes a peaceful and quiet existence, having but little intercourse with the outer world. It consists of a single row of five houses, with another at the end, looking down the court. They face a paved alley of ten feet in breadth. The northern side of Paragon Place is bounded by a brick wall, eight feet high, set about and garnished, for the better protection of the inhabitants, by a plentiful dressing of broken bottles. The wall may also serve as protection to the printers' offices which lie beyond. At all events, it is a barrier insuperable between Paragon Place and the printers. Thus fashion separates itself from business; leisure and retirement from compulsory work.

I would that we might linger over Paragon Place and its inhabitants. About every house there hang half a dozen histories; from the tale of every dweller might be woven a romance of real life, that is a tale of sin and suffering, of poverty and sorrow. We have to do with one only. It is the third tenement in the row. Like the rest, it consists of three main rooms, lighted, each "fore and aft;" the front window looking into the court, the back commanding a view of a small yard beyond, about six feet square, containing a water-butt and a heap of rubbish.

There is a staircase leading to two rooms, one over the other, above. On the left hand of the door, as you go in, is a sort of closet or small room, which may be used as a bedroom when the family overflows the rest of the house. It is lighted and ventilated by an aperture giving space for a single pane of glass.

The doors of the houses, which were once painted green, but long years since, stand open. Every thing about the court is intolerably dirty. Odds and stray bits of vegetables, as cabbage stalks, potato peelings, and such small wreck and *débris*, lie about the stones; a gutter runs along the wall, down which is merrily flowing, at this moment, the bucket of soapsuds which No. 1 has just emptied into it. Two children, having hastily constructed a model ship out of a splinter of wood, have launched it upon this river, and are watching its progress down the tributary stream to the great Mississippi of Gray's Inn Road. They run out with it into the street, and stay there. Then the court is quiet again, except for the pulse of the steam press, which is never silent. The sun shines on the windows of the printers' office, and is reflected back on the doorstep of No. 3, where sits, basking in its warmth, a figure, muffled as if it were winter, and smoking a long clay pipe. He is apparently bent and doubled up, from the effects of age: his shoulders stoop, and his back is rounded. On his head is a soft felt hat, much too large for him, which flaps down on the side nearest the door, but is lifted up on the other side to catch the sun. A crutch is beside him. In his hand is a copy of the day before yesterday's "Daily Telegraph;" and he is reading aloud, slowly and painfully, making comments as he goes — not running so much as crawling — to his companion, a child of nine or ten, who is sitting on the stones, with his back against the wall, in the reflected sunlight. The boy's head is bare: his feet are bare. One sleeve of his jacket is quite gone, the other nearly. His trousers are all rents and tatters, his white legs gleaming through the holes. His shirt will no longer button, and shows signs of approaching dissolution. All this is a trifle, because the weather is warm; and rags are just as comfortable in warm weather as any thing else. Besides, the boy has not been brought up in a school which teaches the cultivation of personal appearance by means of sartorial art. He was far more interested in the problem of how to satisfy that raging wolf which every day gnawed at his stomach, and instigated him to get food by any means.

"So you see, Bill," said the politician, in a thin, quavering voice, "the Gov'ment's gorn and done it agen, and the country's goin' to the devil. Now, if I was in the 'Ouse" —

He stopped and folded his paper.

"Don't go into the 'Ouse, Thoozy," said the child.

"It's not the work'us, stoopid. It's the

House of Parlyment. Some day I think I shall go, to represent Finsbury. I wish there was the price of a half-pint in my pocket. Who's the swell coming up the court?"

The "swell," who was looking inquiringly up and down the court, seeing the pair outside the door, turned his steps in their direction.

"Can you tell me" he spoke to the smoker, whose face was hidden by the flapping hat,—"if a Mrs. Kneebone lives about here?"

He removed his pipe from his mouth, and his great hat from his head, and stood upright in the doorway, waving his hand with an air of authority.

Dick Mortiboy looked at him in astonishment. Behind the wrinkles and lines of age lay—not the color, because the face was perfectly pale and colorless; nor the shape, because the cheeks were sunken and the features prominent; nor the comeliness, because the whole figure was starved and pinched; nor the redundant locks, because the scattered hairs, nearly white, lay sparse and thin about his temples—but an indescribable *look* of youth.

He was about four feet and a half in height; but then he stooped a good deal. He had on a long, coarse coat, made for a grown man. His legs were cased in winter trousers. He had a thick flannel shirt, and a wrapper round his neck. His chest was flattened in, his legs bowed, his body bent. Dick, standing before him on the stones, stared at him without speaking. He had never seen this kind of creature before.

"When you *think* you'll recognize me again," said the boy sarcastically, "perhaps you'll let me know."

"It is a boy, by gad!" said Dick.

The child previously addressed as Bill set up a yell of delight, clapping his hands and dancing round. It was as good fun as he ever assisted at. The other relaxed from his sternness of expression, conceding an aged smile to the frivolities of the situation.

"Are you a boy, or are you a man?" asked Dick. "What's your name? Tell me something about yourself?"

"You can read, I suppose?" said the nondescript, with a patronizing air. "You can do that much, I presume. Young Bill, the writin' materials. Give the old man his bit o' whitin'."

Bill produced a piece of chalk from his trousers pocket.

"Here y'are, Thoozy. Hooray!"

Thoozy inspected the "materials" with care, and looked for a point. This—in what mathematicians would describe as a

rough eikosihedron, or twenty-sided solid—was difficult to find; but selecting something which would suit, he marched gravely down the steps, and, turning the sleeve of his coat up to his elbow, while he supported his long tails under the left arm, raised his right hand to the brick wall. Then he stopped and turned round again.

"You can spell?" he said to Dick, looking at him sideways, as if with suspicion, but always with an eye on Bill.

Dick nodded.

"And read? Because I'm not going to take all this trouble for nothing, you know."

Little Bill screamed, and rolled himself over and over upon the cabbage stalks. Thoozy, with one eye on his young companion, proceeded slowly with his talk.

"Then," he said, stepping back and admiring the effect of the sunlight upon his strokes, "there's a C, and a O O, and a EK. If that don't spell Cook, that ain't my name, and Methoosalem ain't my nature."

"O Lord!" cried Bill, "ain't he a fizzer!"

Dick Mortiboy took the cigar out of his mouth, and contemplated the pair with an expression in which curiosity had the best part.

"So you're Mr. Methoosalem, are you? Pray, is this Bill—little Bill?"

"That is Bill, mister," said Thoozy, "and a very good little Bill he is. I educated that there boy. Bill, show the gentleman what you can do: the Catherine Wheel, my child."

He had resumed his commanding position on the doorstep, and issued his orders with a wave of the pipe, like the director of a circus using his whip.

The boy went through the graceful performance known among his friends of the pavement as the Catherine Wheel. "Hoop-là!" he cried, bringing his bare and dirty feet within an inch of Dick's waistcoat.

"I taught him the wheel," said Thoozy. "I'm too old to do it myself. He learned the 'Hoop-là!' himself, the night we got hold of two gallery checks for the Gayety Theatre. He learnt that there of a fine gal—a dooced fine gal, sir. If I was a younger man"—here he stopped, and winked with a sigh. "Now, Bill, the Inverted Column."

"Never mind the Inverted Column," said Dick. "Here's a shilling for you, Bill. Go and get something to eat."

"Half a pint will be enough for me, William," cried the other grandly, relighting his pipe. "And get a penn'orth o' belly-ache for yourself first. Plums that is, sir," he explained to Dick.

"How old are you, may I ask," said Dick.

"Eighty-six, I am—a great age. I was seventy when I was born, sixteen years ago. And I've been getting older ever since. My old woman in there is only seventy-five."

"Who is your old woman?"

"Here she is, Mrs. Kneebone, sir, herself, the lady you was axing after. Not my wife, you know, nor yet my mother, nor my grandmother. Come out, old woman. Here's a gentleman wants you to drink his health."

She was as withered and wrinkled as Methoosaleem himself, but without his look of childhood. In her hand she held a wooden snuff-box, from which ever and anon she refreshed herself. She wore a dress of some kind of stuff, black in color, and a bonnet on her head which might once have had some shape. At present it had none. An old woman who muttered as she went along: a creature who would have been burned as a witch in the merry old days: an evil-looking, miserable old woman.

She shaded her eyes from the sun, and peered up at the stranger.

"I don't know you, sir. I can't let you in. I never saw you before. You can't come in here."

"What are you talking about?" said Thoozy. "Who said the gentleman did know you? Who talked about coming in? Yah! He wants to have five minutes of your lively society, and he wants to look at you. You ain't none too pretty, neither."

"I want some information, for which I am willing to pay," said the stranger.

"About how long ago, sir?" asked the old woman, with a look of terror at the boy.

"About twelve years ago."

"What about twelve years ago?" She shook all over.

"That's when I began to remember plain," said the boy. "Go ahead, sir; I can answer your questions. Old lady, cut it. Now go, d'yer hear?"

"Thoozy, my dear, be careful," she said, in a trembling voice. "Oh, be careful."

"Cut it, I say. Careful, indeed! Now then, sir. You can't have a more quieter and more genteeler spot than Paragon Place on a warm day in September, about two o'clock, P.M., in the afternoon. The haristocracy is gone to the seaside, and there's no one to interrupt us. Fire away with your questions."

He put his hands in his pockets, and sat down on the doorstep again.

"First, then, that child. You said his name was Bill. Bill what?"

"Lord help you! He ain't got no other name. Now, sir, *do* you think—I asks you as a stranger—do you think it *can* be done for the money? Where's your profit? That's what I say. Where's your profit to come from out of five bob a week?"

He stuck his thumbs in his arm-holes, and looked as sagacious as a publisher.

"Who brought him here? How old is he? Who does he belong to?"

"A-hem! As a proprietor of this yer hospital, and, I may say, the resident physician, I holds out my hand, and I says, says I, How much?"

"Isn't Mrs. Kneebone the proprietor?"

"On'y in the heyes of the bobby. If any thing goes wrong, the coroner holds his inquidge round the corner, and Kneebone she goes before 'em and swears. I sits at home and smokes my pipe."

"Good. Tell me all about the boy. Here's a sovereign down, and five more if the inquiry leads me to any thing I want."

"How do I know what you want?"

"That's just it. You don't know, and so you can't tell lies."

"Don't be too sharp, young feller, else you might fall down, though you are so big, and cut a hole in the pavin' stones. Bill was brought here, a three-weeks' baby, just nine years and a half ago. There was the devil's own trouble to keep him goin'; and he wouldn't have been kep' goin' at all, only his mother come round herself every day."

"What was the name of his mother? Nine years and a half ago? Who was his mother?"

"Polly Tresler."

Dick gave a low whistle.

"You're sure of it? You would swear it? You are *certain* of the date?"

"Take my dick on all the Bibles in the jug. Ask the old woman. Here, mother, come out again!"

She hobbled out.

"Now then, old lady, tell the gentleman how old Bill is. Show him your book. She's got a book, sir, and puts 'em all down."

"I'll show him that page," said Mrs. Kneebone, looking suspicious, "but no more, for five shillings."

It was a sort of register she brought him covering about twenty years. She turned over the pages slowly, and at last arrived, at her date.

"There you are, sir. Read it, but don't look at no more." Dick read,—

"Nov. 5, 1860. Boy—three weeks old—to be called Bill. Eighteen pence a week. Mother's name and address, Miss Tresler."—(here an old address had been

scratched out, and a new one substituted)
— "P. T., Post-office, Market Basing."

Dick's eye ran down the list on the page. There was about half a dozen in the year. To four of their names was written the word, "Dead." To one, "Taken away by his father." Bill made the sixth.

"And that boy, sir, he've been the apple of my eye. He have indeed."

Thoozy winked, and jerked his pipe, which he had resumed, over his left shoulder to indicate that his partner, or principal nurse of the hospital, was practising a little amiable deception. She went on without noticing.

"The clothes he's had o' me; the pocket money he's had o' me; the oranges and apples, and — and — and the tripe he's had: it's what you wouldn't believe, sir. A beautiful breakfast he got only this morning."

"Kinched a kid and collared a bloater in the gutter," interposed Thoozy.

"Now, don't you tell no lies. A idle, good-for-nothin' vagabond, as won't work, and won't do nothin' but smoke and drink." (Here Bill arrived with a cargo of plums and a pint of beer, which Thoozy tackled on the spot.) "It's ten years, sir, if you'll believe me, and I wish-a-ma-die if it ain't gawspel, that that boy said he was gettin' too old to work, and hasn't done a stroke since, but eat up all he can lay his hands to."

"Ten years!" said Thoozy. "So it is. I was only seventy-six, then. I made a curious discovery, mister" — here he winked sideways at the old woman — "a very curious discovery; and I thought I'd make the most of it. On the strength of that there discovery, I'm a-goin' to spend my old age in a honorable retirement, as they says in the papers."

The old woman moved her lips, but said nothing.

"About this boy, now?" said Dick, in reply. "Here he is. If you've given him clothes, old woman, he's worn 'em out; and if you've given him grub, it hasn't agreed with him. Here, let me come in, and I'll take down all you've got to say. Is there such a thing in the house as a table, and paper and pens? Don't be afraid, I'm not going to do you any harm."

He pushed by the woman, who tried to stop him, and passed in. The entrance to the house was like the entrance to Hades, as seen by Æneas, when, aided by the Sibyl, he undertook that perilous adventure of his; "for there were straightway heard cries, and wailing loud, and the spirits of infants, weeping."

Dick pushed open a door, and looked in.

There were lying on the floor, in sheets and flannels, four babies, from a few weeks to a year old; one or two clutching at life with strong and eager little fists; one or two meagre, thin, and emaciated. The old woman bustled by, and began to apply feeding bottles with great assiduity.

Dick looked at Thoozy with disgust. "This is your precious hospital, is it, you little imp? Have you got another room?"

"There's my room and Bill's, up at the top; let's go there. Bill, run and fetch the gentleman a bit of paper, and a pen, and a penn'orth of ink. Upstairs, sir."

The stairs were horribly, fearfully dirty and noisome. Creeping things were on the walls. The bannisters were broken away; and on the top floor, where the boys slept, the planking of the stairs had been taken up to be burned for firewood.

There was no furniture in the room except a table, and a bed spread on the floor. Thoozy sat on the bed, and looked wistfully at his quiet guest.

"You don't want to do no harm to Bill, do you, sir?" speaking quite naturally, and like a boy. "You won't hurt he, will you? 'cos Bill's the only friend I got. The other boys laughs at me: says I'm too old to live long, and asks how long ago I was born, you see. But Bill, he was a right good sort, and we've slep' together ever since he left off pap. My boy, Bill is."

"I won't hurt him, but I shall take him away from here."

"If it's best for him, I sha'n't say nothin'. Don't believe that 'ere old woman, sir. I would work, if I could. But I can't. I'm too weak, and nobody won't have nothin' to say to a baby-farm boy. I tried sellin' papers in the streets, and cigar lights; but the stronger boys pushed me about. I ain't strong, sir. Look at my legs." He pulled up his trousers, and showed a leg about half as big as Dick's wrist. "And I'll tell you something more about Polly, too, sir, if you'll be good to Bill. She was married lawful to Bill's father, 'cos I heard her tell the old woman so. He was a sailor, he was. And he went to sea. You ain't the man, are you, sir?"

Dick started. Here, indeed, was news worth having.

"You boy, find out that man's name, and keep a quiet tongue in your head; and I'll help you all round, except to find work, which is the only thing you can't get in this blessed old country."

"The old woman knows his name. I'll get it for you, never fear. She's afraid of me, she is, since I found her out; but she won't do it, again, she won't."

"What is it you found out?"

"Here comes Bill," said Thoozy. "And the old woman, too" —

Dick pulled out five pounds, and laid them on the table.

"Now, Mrs. Kneebone, let us understand one another. This is for your information, provided it proves correct and true on subsequent investigation."

The old woman eyed the gold greedily.

She began her statement, which was in substance precisely the same as Thoozy had made; gave the dates exactly from her books; explained how the baby had been left with her at a charge of eighteenpence a week, increased first to half a crown, and of late months to five shillings; swore that Bill was the child, and then held out her hand for the money.

"Not so fast," said Dick. "All that, I knew before. This boy told me."

"You little devil!" cried Mrs. Kneebone viciously to Thoozy, who nodded his head and laughed.

"I want more. I want to know about the boy's father. What was his name? and when was he married to Polly Tresler?"

"You want to know too much. Now, tell me, do you want to do Polly a bad turn?"

"I don't want to do her a good one, certainly; but I want to do a good turn to a friend of my own: and, to get at the way of doing it, I want all the information I can lay my hands on."

"She's a bad lot Polly is. I've knowed her for sixteen years and more. Ah, me, I wasn't always in this poor place! But there, many's the good thing I've done for Polly. I introduced her to her first, down Poplar way, when I had as tidy a little tobacco shop as ever was. Ah, dear me!"

"Her first?" Dick looked sharply at her. "Who was her first?"

"Oh! he was a mate — married at Lime-us Church. But they didn't get on. Polly used to beat him; and she got ashamed of a husband who couldn't beat her like the other men. A good, quiet sort of body, too, and a first officer. Bowker, his name was. So when he went away to sea, she went away from Poplar, too."

"There's two sovereigns for you. And now, go on."

The woman looked thirstily at the rest of the money, and presently went on again.

"Now, I don't know very well. She took up with a young fellow down in the country, I'm not quite certain whether he married her or not, I only heard her story afterward. Then he ran away from her.

She came up to London, and got married again."

"What, a third time?"

"Well, what was she to do? She'd run away from her first, and her second had run away from her; and so she took up with another. Well, he died. He was a sailor too. Polly always liked sailors. Only this one used to whack her when he come home drunk, and I think Polly often enough regretted her first."

"About the first. Do you know if he is alive, and where to find him?"

"I do, sir," said Mrs. Kneebone, "and Polly doesn't. At least, I know where to look for him; and he was alive when I was at Poplar last, because I heard about him from some old pals of his."

"What did you say his name is?"

"Don't you think I've earned the five pounds, sir?"

Dick pushed them across the table.

"Thank you kindly, sir. His name, sir, is Bowker: Cap'en Bowker — good gentleman. And I'll tell you where you can find all about him; and I'm sure you'll consider it an extra."

"Look here," said Dick, flushing — nothing in all his life ever gave him so much joy as the story of his wife's progress through life — "if all you say is true, this will be the best day's work you ever did. Now, I'm going to pay you what Polly owes for the boy, five and thirty shillings. Here you are. Next, I'm going to take away little Bill."

She threw up her arms in an ecstasy of grief and lamentation.

"Take away my Bill? Take away my little boy, Bill, that I raised with my own hands? Oh! sir, I couldn't let him go, I couldn't, really; not under five pounds, sir."

"She never giv' me nothin', and she's allus whackin' me when Thoozy isn't by," said the object of the more than maternal solicitude.

Thoozy interrupted her, authoritatively bringing his crutch handle on the floor.

"You're a-goin' to let him go for nothin' at all," he remarked quietly, "so there ain't no more to be said. Hold your jaw. Bill, old chap, the big swell's a-goin' to take you away. He looks as if he was the sort to give you clothes, and make you respectable. Don't cry, because it's all for your own benefit; and he seems a good un, though he is so precious big."

"Come, Bill," said Dick, "will you come with me? Say good-by to your friends, and come along. Old woman, you've had your money. Here, Thoozy, is your share."

"Don't cry, Bill," said Thoozy again, beginning to cry himself — "as it's all for

the best. And what's for the best, you know, is got to be done, if it's physikin' the babbies, or a washin' of 'em."

Amid the tears of Thoozy and the lamentations of Mrs. Kneebone, Dick bore off his prize. Arrived at the foot of the stairs, they heard a curious noise above, as of heavy blows and wrestling.

"What are they doing, Bill?"

Here came thuds and groans.

"They're a givin' of it to one another. She wants to grab all the tin. Listen. Hooray! Thoozy's got his crutch. She was always a whackin' me, awful, till he got the stick. Now she's a catchin' it. Oh, ain't Thoozy a good un, just!"

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THEY went away, Dick holding the boy by the hand. He did not in the least know what to do with the child. He had taken him away by an impulse, thinking of the great fun it would be to carry Polly's own child down to Market Basing, and present him to his mother. But for the present, he found himself in a comparatively respectable part of London, with a ragged, little, unwashed *gamin* on his hands, not knowing what to do next. It was altogether an embarrassing position.

"As for the boy," he thought, looking down at the little mite, holding his hand, "I suppose he must be washed and dressed. But, who's to do it? And, as for Polly—upon my word, Polly, there's a heavy reckoning against you. I suppose I must go and find a lawyer. Bill, my boy, you're dirty, you know, and ragged; where shall we go to get you washed?"

"Dunno. Never was washed."

"Well, then, where can we go to get some new clothes?"

"Dunno. Never had no new clothes. I say, you go to the pawnbroker's, — that's the place," said Bill, speaking from his own experience, and brightening up a little.

Dick stopped a policeman, who stared at the child with hungry eyes, apparently disappointed at finding that he was not to "run him in."

Bill howled dismally at the sight of the embodiment of civil power.

"I ain't done nothink," he cried, trying to escape.

"Comes of a bad lot, sir, I'm afraid; but he's never been in trouble yet."

"I want to get the boy washed and dressed. In fact," Dick explained, "I am going to take him away, and bring him up respectably."

The policeman's face brightened.

"Are you now, sir? I'm very glad to hear that, very glad indeed. They'll do what you want, for you, at a public-house I know, not far off. I'm just off my beat, and will go with you. So you're going to take him off the streets are you? Well, now, that's good of you; that's real goodness and charity. The boy's got no belongings; living at an old woman's—ah, you know. If you can afford to spend the money, it is not much to rich people, take more than one. They're growing up here by hundreds. Take as many as you can afford, and put 'em to school. It'll cost money, because school ain't every thing. Don't give to missionary societies and rubbish. They do tell me that three-quarters of a million a year is sent out to convert the blacks. Do you know, sir, how many boys and girls that would provide for? Fifty thousand, sir. Think of that. My son, who's a scholar, totted it up for me. Fifty thousand! If the rich people round London only knew what was inside it, they'd be frightened. I tell you what, sir, if things is going on like this, they'll have something to be frightened about; for the roughs are getting most too strong for us. There'll be an ugly rush some day, you'll see. But people won't do any thing without societies. Well, sir, if you've got money, you get up a society for rich people taking children and bringing them up respectable, to be sailors and soldiers, and even—ah! ah! and why not?—even the police force, if they've got the brains."

"I will," said Dick, "if ever I do start a society, which isn't likely."

"None of your institutions, and refuges, and penitentiaries, and reformatories, and foolishness, sir. You go in for a society where the people are going to look after the children themselves, and not send them out into the world with a ticket all the rest of their lives. Who's going to get over being a reformatory boy? I hav'n't got patience with it. What I says to rich people, is, Don't talk about doing good, and don't belong to societies, but come down here. I'll talk to 'em; and pick out a boy and a girl, or half a dozen boys and girls, and have 'em taught, and washed, and kept respectable, and it'll be the best ticket to get into heaven that they'll find anywhere. Here's the place, sir. I'll go in with you."

The policeman led the way, and explained what was wanted.

The boy was undressed, still crying, and put into a warm bath, Dick looking on, — he was so horribly thin that every rib stuck out like a skeleton's, — and, for the first time in his life, thoroughly scrubbed and washed. Then, the policeman having

brought an intelligent man from a second-hand shop, with a small bundle of all sorts, he was speedily dressed in a garb which astonished and delighted him beyond measure. For it was the garb of a "swell." He put his hands into his pockets, and left off crying. "Whacking" was not imminent, at any rate.

"Now," said Dick, "let us have a good look at him."

He put the boy on the table, and pulled his face back.

His eyes were blue, his nose was snub, his mouth thin and delicate, his chin sharp-pointed and clear, his hair so light as to be almost flaxen.

"Hum!" said Dick; "they can't say you are like me, any how. My hair's black, my nose is straight, my mouth is full, my chin is broad and square, like all the Mortiboy's. And you're not too much like you're mother either, except about the eyes."

Polly's eyes were a dark blue—an unusual color, which this boy's had. For the rest, a mere shrimp of a boy, so small that you would not take him for more than seven, but a pretty, bright-faced child, now the dirt was taken off him, with the sharp expression that a London boy always has.

But somehow the boy, now he was dressed, had the look of a gentleman. There was no coarseness in his features or his expression; his eyes had a dreamy, far-off look, which is seldom seen in any but home-bred boys; his mouth was tremulous and sensitive. It was only when he spoke, that his street education showed itself.

Dick paid for his accommodation at the public-house, thanked his friend the policeman, and took his prize away with him.

"How old are you, Bill?"

"Ten, next January."

"Did you hear us talking about your mother just now?"

"Yes; but I never seen her."

"Would you like to see her?"

"Not if she's like Mother Kneebone. I'd rather stay with you."

"Suppose, Bill, you were to stay with me, and you were to see a woman called Polly Treeler?"

"That's her name?"

"Yes. And suppose she were to ask you questions, do you think you'd let out any thing about Mother Kneebone?"

Bill looked up sharply.

"I'm fly," he said. "I won't let out no think. Damn if I do."

"I say, young 'un, don't say *damn* again, because the swells never do that till they're grown up. It isn't wicked then, I suppose."

At his lodgings, Lafleur was waiting for him.

"What have you here, Dick? what new game is on?"

"Only a little game of euchre with a woman. And this is the Right Bower, though he don't look like it. I'm going to win it: the stakes are worth having, I can tell you."

"You always win every thing, though he certainly does not look much like a winning card. Give him something to eat."

Dick rang the bell, and consigned the child to his landlady, with injunctions to give him plenty to eat and drink.

When he came home that night, at twelve, he found the boy curled up on the hearth-rug, sound asleep. He carried him into his bed room, undressed him, and laid him in bed. Bill opened his eyes for a moment; but, not understanding the position of things, thought it was a queer dream, and went sound off to sleep again.

In the morning, Dick found him still asleep. He had curled his lean arms round Dick's neck, and laid his little cheeks in Dick's big beard, thinking he was in bed with Thoozy.

"Poor little cuss!" said Dick.

That morning he went to a lawyer, one whose name he had heard from Mr. Battiscombe at Market Basing. To him he confided the whole story of his marriage and Polly's wicked goings-on.

They had a long consultation, after which Dick strode away with a lightened countenance.

Bill was washed and dressed ready for him when he came back. The landlady was also ready with a representation. The boy was not in the agreement, and the trouble he gave was to be considered. Dick considered it. Then she begged to call Mr. Mortiboy's attention to the language in which he expressed his ideas,—

"Which," she said, "is truly awful. If I had my boys home from school, they shouldn't stay in the same house with him, not for gold."

She shook her finger at Bill, who looked at his protector to see whether he was going to be "whacked." But Mr. Mortiboy only laughed.

"We shall cure him presently, I dare say. Bring him his dinner as soon as you can. Hungry, Bill?"

"I'm allus hungry," said the boy.

When his dinner came, which was also Dick's luncheon, Bill made a rush at the dish as soon as the cover was taken off. Chops! He seized one in his fingers, and ran to a corner of the room, where he fell to tearing it with his teeth, after the manner of a menagerie tiger. The landlady pointed out this conduct to her tenant.

"That's the way he had his supper last night, sir. A regular little savage."

Dick nodded, and laughed. The woman retired. As she shut the door, the urchin, encouraged by the approving smiles of his patron, as he thought, performed a Catherine Wheel all round the room, with the bone of his mutton-chop in his mouth, finishing off with a "Houp-là !" as he had done the day before. Then he went back to his corner, and gnawed the bone.

"Bill, take the bone out of your mouth, and sit down on that chair. Did you never sit down to table in your life?"

"Eh?"

"How did you get your dinner at Mrs. Kneebone's?"

"Never had no dinner. Morning, mother — made tea for herself; sometimes I got so. If Thoozy was able to get up. When Thoozy had rheumatics dreadful bad, so that he couldn't get up, I only got a bit of bread. Went out all day on the cadge. If I got nothink, old Mother Kneebone giv' me a whackin' and another bit of bread. When Thoozy was all right, I got on first-rate. Thoozy used to help hisself and me too."

"Well, now you've got to learn manners."

Bill then received his first lesson in the usages of polite society — in teaching him which, as it was a novel occupation, Dick found the afternoon slip away pleasantly enough.

"Nobody ever taught you any thing, I suppose?"

"Only Thoozy. He used to read to me. He's awful clever — knows every thing. He promised to learn me to read as soon as he could find time. Once I was took up by a lady and put to school. It was a Sunday, because the bells were ringing and the swells going to church. There was a bun and a cup of tea — jolly! — and then they taught us. I went lots of times on Sundays. They told me to say prayers and to sing hymns. I sang one at home they taught me; but old Mother Kneebone took a stick, and said she'd break every bone in my body if I didn't give over."

"They never taught you your duty, I suppose," said the moral Dick.

"What's that? There was a man in a straight black gownd said we was all going — Thoozy and me, and all the lot — to hell."

"That's good news to tell a child," said Dick.

"So I told Thoozy; and I asks him where it is, and what it's like when you've got there. He ups and says, 'If it ain't better than Paragon Place, it won't be very jolly for us, Bill. Let's hope there'll

be plenty to eat and no Mother Kneebone.' Then I thought I should like to go there. But Thoozy said school wasn't no good."

Presently the boy, unaccustomed to a chop and half a glass of beer, fell into a profound slumber; and Dick smoked on, thinking what he was to do with him.

He staid one week in town, having interviews with the lawyers, and making out his case against Polly. This was not, with the data they had to go upon, at all a difficult task. After a few days, the story ran much as Mrs. Kneebone had told him.

Polly, at the age of eighteen, had gone up to London into service. She made certain female friends who had belongings at Poplar, where she went on her "Sundays out." There she fell in with the mate of a sailing ship, a man twenty-five years older than herself, who was attracted by her rosy cheeks and bright eyes, and married her. According to Mrs. Kneebone — who ought to know something of feminine nature — the main cause of the conjugal unhappiness which ensued was that Polly despised a man who allowed his wife to beat him. No doubt there was a certain amount of truth in Mrs. Kneebone's remark: far be it from me to suggest suspicion as to any statement made by a woman in most respects so admirable; but this was not all the truth. When Capt. Bowker went away, he left, in lieu of a monthly allowance from the shippers, which most merchant skipper's wives draw, a sum of money equivalent to it, calculated to last during the period of his absence. It must be observed that Polly was, if I may coin the term, a pseudo-maniac: she lied habitually, and even causelessly. Had she been of a higher rank in life, she would have become, of course, a novelist, drawing from her imagination some of that superfluous energy which prompted her now to invent, whenever invention appeared not only profitable, but even amusing. She had, in obedience to this proclivity, lied about herself and her belongings to her husband. Bowker had been told by her that she came from Cumberland. Why from Cumberland? I don't know. Polly only knew that it was a long way off, so she said Cumberland; and, as her husband had never been there, it answered as well as any other place.

When Capt. Bowker had been away for about a year — that is, for more than half of his appointed time — Polly bethought herself that she ought to go to Market Basing, and pay a visit to her parents. She went; found her father dead, and her mother on the point of going to the work-house; staid there, promising at first for a few weeks only. But weeks passed into

months; and when her husband returned, bringing a parcel of Chinese silks for his wife, and a parrot that knew how to cough and swear, having learned these accomplishments from a consumptive mariner, he found his house there, and "all standing," as he expressed it, but no Polly. Nor could he light upon any traces of his Polly. First because he was a warm-hearted man, he shed tears, and wrung the neck of the parrot for swearing at him. Next, he thanked the Lord for being rid of a bad lot, sold the sticks, paid the rent, and went to sea again.

Then something happened to Polly. She met Dick Mortiboy; fell in with him in the fields as he was walking home from Parkside to Derngate; met him again — met him every night; saw that the boy was madly in love with her; encouraged him, but gave herself all the airs of a *certain farouche*; received his presents; and then.

Bigamy. It is an ugly word. Polly said it over and over to herself about this time. It means all sorts of unpleasantness: it conveys ideas of courts, policemen, prison, an unbecoming uniform, a diet rather plain than luxurious, compulsory early rising, a limited circle of friends, very few books to read. A very ugly word. But bigamy without the danger? to marry twice and not be found out? to marry the son of the richest man in the town so that the sailor husband should never know? This seemed a prize worth risking something for. And what did she risk? Nothing. She asked her mother. Nothing, repeated the old lady. How could Bowker find out? He was bound to go to sea; he was always afloat: he was twenty years older than herself; he might get drowned — most likely he would get drowned — perhaps he was drowned already; and then she would have her new husband clear to herself.

And the son of the richest man in the town!

Young Dick pressed her. In his imagination the fresh-cheeked, rosy village girl, who said she was eighteen when she was five and twenty, was an angel. Dick was a fool, of course; but many men have been fools at nineteen. He pressed her to promise to marry him. She promised. That meant nothing, because she could always break off. But his father sent him up to town to work for a time in a London bank, and — and — alas! for Polly's vow — it succumbed; and one fine morning she walked up the aisle of St. Pancras Church, and was married to Dick Mortiboy.

amy! That's a very pretty rod to hold over my Polly's head; and the worthy sailor still alive."

When Dick disappeared there were two courses open to his afflicted wife. She might go to Mr. Mortiboy, and proclaim herself his daughter-in-law; or she might go back to her Bowker. She reasoned out the matter with her mother; and, by her advice, elected to return to her first husband. The two reasons which the experienced matron, her mamma, urged, were: first, that if Bowker found her out, it would lead to criminal proceeding and great unpleasantness; secondly, that if she told Mr. Mortiboy, he would infallibly, so angry would he be, refuse to afford her any assistance whatever. So she went to Poplar.

Capt. Bowker, her old friends told her, was gone to the China Seas in the country trade: would not be back for five years. Further, he had left a message, that, if Polly came back, she was to be told that he was quit of her, and that she was henceforth no wife of his. That formula constitutes a nautical divorce. So Polly had to abandon hopes in that direction. Of course, she might, had she known, have gone to the shippers in whose employ her husband was, and demanded an allowance as his wife. She did not know their names. Then she fell in love for the first time. It was also with a sailor, one William Flint, ship's carpenter by profession, who so far overcame her scruples of conscience as to lead her to the altar a third time. Mr. Flint was the father of little Bill. He died before the birth of his son, after a short period of matrimonial happiness, during which he effectually taught Polly the beauty of submission by means of a thick stick. Mrs. Flint, thus bereft of two husbands, and widowed of a third, left her child in care of Mrs. Kneebone, and lived in London for some years, still single, though not without admirers. When, like Horace's Lydia, she ceased to hear them knock at her door, she retired to Market Basing, where the rest of her history is known.

"The whole case," said the lawyer, after exposing the principal facts, "is as simple as possible. Bowker still lives, and has a pension from his employers. We can put our hands upon him whenever you please. The woman committed bigamy in marrying you. You may proceed against her if you like. Bowker may get a divorce if he pleases. The boy is no more yours than he is mine."

"Thank you," said Dick. "I'll wait a week or so, and think things over. I sup-

"Bigamy," said Dick, chuckling — "big-

pose I couldn't marry again without making any fuss about it?"

"You might, certainly; but you had better not just yet. Put yourself wholly in our hands, dear sir."

Dick went away thoughtful. He was not altogether satisfied. Polly was a bad lot — a very bad lot. At the same time, it seemed mean to put her into prison, and bring her to utter shame and misery. He was always tender to criminals, not from any self-compunctions or prickings of conscience, but chiefly from the mental attitude of resistance to law into which his roving years had put him. Could not a compromise be effected? Suppose she were to go away, and be silent about it all? Suppose — but, in short, he would wait a little.

Then he thought of Grace. Free, free at last! The follies of his youth trampled down and forgotten! Love before him, and a peaceful life, such as he yearned after, away in some garden of pleasant England, hand in hand with Grace! Polly's chance was slender.

He went home to little Bill. It took some days to teach the child that mankind at large, though strangers, were not his mortal enemies. He learned the smaller lessons — those of propriety and the habits of civilization — easily enough, because he had nothing to unlearn, never having had any manners at all. He was a gentle child, too — submissive and docile. His worst difficulty, of course, was his language, which he readily perceived was not the same as that employed by his patron. He used to listen to what people said, and then go away and imitate them in a corner — gestures, and voice, and all. A perfectly wild boy: as untaught, save from the few lessons which he had got from Thoozy, as regards the outer world, as if he had been born in a desert and reared on the top of a mountain. A boy whose mind was like wax to receive impressions — a blank waxen tablet, for the stylus of Dick to work upon. Bad things he knew, after a fashion; but as they had never been called bad to him, of course it did not matter. As Euripides has explained, we only know what is bad by the canon of what is good. Good and bad were alike to little Bill.

In a day or two, the little animal was as fond of his patron, and as entirely trustful in him, as if he had been a dog. He ran about after him, he curled up at his feet if he sat down; he climbed upon his knees; he sat up solemnly, and stared at him; he listened to all he said, and repeated it to himself. And Dick gave him, in that week which was spent in completing the "case" against Polly, a whole volume of

moral philosophy, and a complete sheaf of moral axioms.

Mindful of the untrustworthy character of the Church Catechism, from the evidence he had received of it — he had not read it since he was a boy — he composed a short one for himself, which he asked the boy daily.

"What is a boy's first duty, Bill?"

"Never steal, never tell lies, never swear, hold his jaw, do his work, go away from England, and get on."

He numbered his commandments off on his fingers, and went through them glibly enough.

"Right, boy. When I was your age, they used to teach me the Ten Commandments; but somehow they didn't seem to stick. I didn't want to worship graven images, so it was no good telling me not. Boys do prig, Bill, and don't get found out. They go on priggings, and then they do get found out. Then you know what happens."

"The thing to do is to persuade people to trust you. Show that you are able to get on, and you will. Whatever you do, Bill, put your back into it. I knew a poor creature in the States who was always having chances, and always failing, because he never had the pluck to take them. He had the fever last time I saw him, in a poor, mean sort of way. Hadn't the pluck to shake like other people."

"Here's another commandment for you, Bill. *Always be ready to fight.* It's the fighting men get the best of it. If a boy insults you, up with your fist. People are mostly cowards. If you make them afraid, they'll do any thing. Remember that, Bill."

"Never you trust people that go round cracking you up to your face. If I wanted to get something out of you, I should say, 'Bill, you're a pretty boy, and a nice behaved boy.' As I want to do you good, I say, 'Bill you're a thin, mealy-faced little devil, without enough strength to squeeze the life out of a mosquito.' You'll be no good till you're fat and strong, and know how to talk, and to behave, and to read. You remember that, Bill."

"You'll have to go to school soon, my boy. I'm not going to have you taught a lot of rubbish, on pretence of improving your intellect, because the masters don't know any thing else. You'll learn to talk French and German; you'll learn music; you'll learn to ride, and to fence, and to box; and you'll learn all the science you can get stuffed into you. But no Latin, my boy, and no rubbish."

"Keep your eyes wide open, Bill, for shams and humbugs. Everybody in Eng-

land, almost, is a humbug. You'll have to make money, and you can't do it if you stay here, without pretending and telling lies. When you get big, old chap, you and I will go away to the West, and make a clearing, and grow our own crops. That's real, at any rate. Remember that, Bill.

"Don't be in a hurry to fall in love. Wait till you are five and twenty before you think about a girl at all. Then get married as soon as you can. When we get to Market Basing, I'll show you the kind of girl you may fall in love with. You remember that

"Never be satisfied *till you've got all you want*. Rich people teach the poor to be humble and contented. That's because they want to keep what they've got. If you see a man humble, *kick him till he's proud*. And if you see a man contented, have him locked up in a lunatic asylum.

"I remember once, out there, we caught a man in the act of horse-stealing. Some were for hanging him. 'Don't do that,' I said. 'Let's tar and feather him.' So we did; and when the job was finished—he really looked beautiful—we made him dance a breakdown. The poor devil was frightened, and looked as miserable as if the rope was round his neck. So one of the crowd shouts out to him, 'Dance jolly,' he says, 'dance jolly; or, by the powers, we'll hang you.' That man instantly looked as jolly as if it was all fun and jokes—face wreathed with smiles, as the books say. I never saw a better breakdown. So, if you see a man humble, you kick him till he's proud. Remember that, Bill

"One man's as good as another, Bill. Don't you be afraid of a man because he's got a carriage, and a different coat to yours. He's only better than you if he's stronger and has got better brains.

"Never you take a thing on trust. A man on board the boat from America wanted to persuade me about his religious notions. Said they were Bishop somebody's. That's all he had to believe them by. Bill, it's a mighty poor way of knowing things, if you believe all they tell you. Some day I'll tell you what a priest in Mexico wanted me to believe.

"Manners, my boy. Get manners as soon as you can. They help a man more than any thing else. Always be polite to everybody; but, if you want any thing, let them know it at starting. It saves a great deal of fighting. As I told you, if you have manners to start with, and pluck to back your demands, you'll get on."

The sermons, of which these are only notes, were not all delivered in a single day, or in a single week. They are inserted

here to indicate the nature of the course of philosophy which Dick was putting his young pupil through. From time to time he examined him, added to the commandments which formed his catechism; illustrated his position by anecdotes; made a sort of running commentary on his teaching, or gave the boy an exercise on some knotty point.

All this excellent moral teaching we are fain to pass over, because space and time are limited. Anybody who wants to know more of Dick's teaching may purchase his aphorisms of me, on moderate terms, to be mutually agreed upon.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

It was in a very changed mood that Dick went back to Market Basing; one that boded little good to Polly. He went back rejoicing in his freedom. He could try once more for his cousin, Grace Heathcote. If she accepted he would—what would he do?—write to his lawyers to get his marriage with Polly Tresler annulled in the quickest manner, and at any cost.

With him, of course, went little Bill. Dick had got him dressed in a fantastic garb of his own invention, consisting chiefly of brown velvet and gold lace, in which the child looked wonderfully beautiful. I said before that he had the look of a gentleman. It was more than this: he had that look of refinement and intelligence which might have been produced in a boy of extraordinary talent by a course of the most careful training, the highest kind of education. He was now almost presentable: he had ascertained most of the words which are *tapu*: he was convinced that his original theories as to the nature of women, based on his experience of Mrs. Kneebone, were erroneous, or at least not capable of general application; he did not take to his heels when he saw a policeman; he ate and drank like a Christian. The only thing which made him sometimes troublesome was that he really did not know how, without using *tapu* words, to express his ideas; and he sometimes, by imitating exactly what he saw others do, provoked the observer's smile, or stimulated his curiosity.

Dick denied himself his cigar in the train, thinking that the smell of a smoking-carriage might be bad for the boy. Consequently there were ladies in the carriage: two young ladies who whispered to each other, and shot telegraphic signals about nothing out of the corners of their

eyes, and an old one. The old lady fell to admiring the boy. She looked at him for a long time, and could not resist the impulse to talk to him.

"Your son, may I ask, sir?" she said to Dick.

"My ward, madam."

"Come to me, my dear. I've got a grandson something like him." She drew the child to her knee. Little Bill looked wistfully at Dick. "What is your name, my dear?"

"Bill."

"Y—e—s— William — a pretty name."

"Tain't William. It's Bill."

"Dear me!" thought the old lady; "this is a very vulgar child. Now talk to me, my dear," she said aloud.

This was a staggerer for little Bill. He was not anxious now to answer questions, being quite aware that his previous history though not discreditable perhaps, had yet been unfortunate. He was silent for a little, and then, unfortunately recollecting exactly what he had seen his patron's landlady in London do one afternoon when she brought up the bill, he slipped off the old lady's knee, and, striking an attitude, half deprecating, half assertive, he coughed behind his hand, and murmured, —

"It was not always thus with me. I have had happier days."

Then he placed his hand on his heart, and sighed deeply. Then he looked at Dick, to see if he had done any thing wrong.

In a word, the boy was a little monkey, — just as imitative, just as quick and clever.

"God bless my soul!" cried the old lady; "what an extraordinary child!"

The two young ladies screamed. Dick laughed. And the boy, seeing their amusement jumped up and down, laughing too.

"Pardon him, madam," said Dick. "By an unlucky series of accidents, my ward's education has been totally neglected. Sit here, my boy, and do not let us talk any more."

No one was in the villa to receive them. Dick took the boy by the hand, and led him into the house. All the magnificence bewildered him.

"Do you live here, Uncle Dick?"

"This is my house, Bill; and here you and I will live together as jolly as we can. Come up stairs. Now this, my boy, is to be your room. There isn't a bed in it at present, but I will get you one. It is your own room. We shall have you taught to read and write; and then you shall have books, if you take to books as I expect

you will. And now — I wish you could ride — we will have a little drive into the country together."

The groom brought round Dick's dog-cart, and they drove off.

First, to the bank. Bill trotted in after his protector, following him like a little dog.

"Who is this?" asked Ghrimes.

"This is little Bill, William Flint by name, adopted ward of Mr. Dick Mortiboy. Don't look suspicious, Ghrimes."

"Indeed, I was not thinking any thing of the sort."

Dick transacted his business, which did not take long, and went out. He took the road to Hunslope. People looked at the cart with astonishment. What new thing had happened? Young Mr. Mortiboy with a child beside him! Polly, standing at the door of her mother's cottage, saw him drive past. Saw the boy, too, and wondered. During this interval she had been full of fear and uncertainty and rage. It was not fear of the other turning up; it was bodily fear of being killed if she offended her husband. She resolved to go at least to the villa that very evening, and have it out. Not a thought of little Bill!

"Oh, what a pretty boy!" cried Grace. "Lucy come and look. Who is he, Dick?"

"He's my ward now. A week ago he was anybody's ward, running about the streets. I've had him cleaned and new rigged, you see; and I don't think he looks amiss. Shake hands as I taught you, Bill. Grace, come and talk to me for five minutes in the garden. Lucy, take care of the boy, will you? Give him a lesson in good behavior."

Grace saw that he had something of importance to say, and led the way to the garden without another word. It was one of those old-fashioned gardens, where you are sure of finding all the old flowers side by side with the best of the new, — mignonette, wall-flower, sweet-William, Venus's looking-glass, polyanthus, London pride, and the rest. At the end lay a sort of little shrubbery, behind which again was an arbor.

"Come into the arbor, Grace," said Dick.

He was looking wonderfully serious and thoughtful; his firm lips twitching with some anxieties, his eyes cast down.

He motioned to Grace to go in and sit down; but she remained standing outside.

They were behind the shrubbery, and hidden from the house.

"You remember the scene at the cross, Grace?"

"I have spoken to no one about it."

"I knew you would not. You found out then two secrets of my life, both of which I wanted to hide from you: one, that I love you; the other, that I am married already. Since that night, Grace, I have made a discovery."

"What is it, Dick?"

"That I can free myself, Grace; that I am free already. I can be divorced. The marriage was not a real one. I am certain of that. The obstacle exists no longer, or will exist no longer in a very short time. All that my money can do to further the separation of that woman from me shall be done. I have told the lawyers to spare no trouble, to hunt up every atom and scrap of her life, to ferret out every secret she ever had. I shall hold myself up to ridicule in the papers, perhaps. What does that matter? Who cares for a day's notoriety? Free I *will* be; free I *must* be."

"I should like to congratulate you, Dick; but it seems all so dreadful. Are you quite sure? O Dick! don't be cruel to — to an innocent woman."

"Am I sure? Grace, I could send her into court at once, to-day, with my evidence in my hands; but I will not: I will wait for more. How bad that woman is, you could never know, you could never even suspect. Bad wife of a bad husband. We were fitly mated then; we are not fitly mated now, and she must go." His face was stern and hard. Suddenly it lit up again, and he burst into one of those quaint soft laughs of his which made every one else laugh too. His laugh was as infectious as another person's yawn. "I forgot to tell you, Grace. Such fun! After you went away, I met her again by the river. She had been drinking more, and said something or other which made me in a rage, I believe. At all events, I took her by the arms and chucked her in."

"Dick! you might have drowned her."

"Yes. I didn't think of that till she was at the bottom, and I saw the bubbles coming up — her bubbles! But there was no fear. Bless you! she came to the top, and floated like a cork. You should have seen her face when she came out!"

Dick told the story quite simply, as if it was the most natural thing in the world that he should throw his wife into the river. Grace looked at him with astonishment, and then began to laugh as well. It was impossible to treat Dick like an ordinary creature.

"Now look here, Grace, my dear," Dick went on. "I offended you at the cross, and behaved like a — like a — mean Mex-

ican, with my love, and my fury, and all the rest of it. I'm very sorry and ashamed. Tell me again I am forgiven."

"Of course you are forgiven, Dick."

"Yes; I was mad then because of Polly. But she's as good as gone now, and I am mad no more. And — the truth remains, Grace, that I love you more than all the world together. It is all exactly as I told you a fortnight ago."

"But you mustn't love me, Dick. I belong to somebody else."

"Must not love you, my dear? Why, Grace, you might as well tell me I must not eat or drink. Not love you when I see you, and talk to you, and take your hand in mine — this little hand" — he took it as he spoke, and held it in his, Grace only looking him straight in the face: "this little hand. Why, Grace, do you think I am made of stone?"

"Indeed, I am sure you are not, Dick. But do you think I am a woman to give her word one day, and recall it the next? Is that fair, Dick?"

"It would be if you loved me. I should not care, unless you were to take away your word from me, Grace. All is fair in love."

"No; but I do not love you, Dick; I never can love you. Listen, and I will tell you all my secrets. I talk to you because you love me, as I can talk to no one else. And because I trust you, Dick, I tell you what I can hardly tell my own sister. Indeed she would not understand me." She laid her hand in his, it rested on the back of the garden seat. "Dick, do you remember what you told me — how you tremble when I touch you? It is all exactly the same with me. When I hear Frank's step, — I never do now; but I say now, because I dream of it still, — I tremble all over. When he comes near me, I feel all the blood rushing to my face. If he touches me, my pulses beat. If I see his handwriting, my hand shakes. If I awake at night, thinking of him, I do not want to sleep any more, and lie patiently, praying to God for him. When I pass their dear old house, I cannot keep my tears down. When I have nothing to do, I go to the lane — see there: you are tall, and can look over the hedge: it is in the lane beyond the next field — where he first told me he loved me, and sit down, and think it all over again. O Dick, such a cold day it was! and yet we were so warm: such a snowy, frosty, windy day in January, and yet I was so glad and happy! I never knew that I loved him until he told me that he loved me, and then I knew — oh, in a moment! I knew that there could be no other man in all the world for me but Frank. Dear Dick, I

love you too, but not in this way. See, I can give you my hand without trembling. I can see you coming without my pulses beating faster. I read you all my heart: more, more than I could ever, I think, tell to Frank. I tell you to make you leave off loving me."

Dick shook his head. He was sitting down now, on the garden seat, holding her hand in his. He stooped and kissed it.

"Dick, dear Dick! don't be cruel to me. Mamma is unkind because she wants you to marry me, and says that I don't encourage you."

Dick laughed ruefully.

"I don't want any encouragement, Grace."

"Every thing seems somehow dark and gloomy. Don't be cruel, Dick. Be my dear old Dick, like you were years ago, before you went away, when I was a little thing, and you a big boy. I can never love you, Dick. Let me say it again and again, and over and over, so that you may believe me at last. Then, if I were to marry you, how would it be with you? How should you like your wife to be brooding over her ruined lover, and trying to do a cold-hearted duty by her husband? Dick it would be wicked. It would kill me, it would drive you mad. Don't ask me, don't ask me, my cousin, for I love my Frank."

She stopped now because she could not go on any longer, and her voice broke down. Dick's head was bent above her hand, and he said nothing. Presently a tear—only one—of the largest size consistent with the laws which guide the formation of drops, fell upon her hand. Grace had made her lover weep. Since his mother died, he had shed no tear. They stood so for some minutes.

Five minutes before this, Mrs. Heathcote, returning home, found Lucy with the boy.

"It is Dick's new *protégé*," she explained. "Grace and he are in the garden."

"*Protégé*! stuff and nonsense!" said Mrs. Heathcote. "What does Dick want with children?"

She went to the back of the house, and looked out into the garden. No Grace there. Then she stepped softly across the lawn, and heard voices behind the shrubbery. She stopped and listened. She heard the words, "Don't ask me, my cousin. I love my Frank," and, turning pale, hurried back to the house. She could not speak.

Presently Dick lifted his head with a smile. Grace knew then that she had won the battle.

"I give you up, Grace, dear. All the same, I love you still. But I will never again speak—of love to you. That, at least, I promise."

"You must promise me more, Cousin Dick."

"What more? I will promise you any thing you like to ask, child Grace."

"Help Frank."

"Yes, my sister," answered Dick humbly.

"Am I your sister? Then Frank is your brother, Dick. You must help your brother."

"Let me kiss you once, my dear. Let me have one kiss."

He took her head in his hands, and kissed her, solemnly, not passionately, on forehead and cheek. She disengaged herself, blushing and confused, with the tears in her eyes. What was she that this man, so good, so kind, should love her so?

"There was a solemn oath in every kiss, Grace. You may trust me, for Frank and yourself, to the death. You are both mine. Tell me only what I am to do first."

"I will find his address from Kate, Dick; and then, oh, then we shall know what to do."

"I know what to do already," cried Dick, his face brightening up like a corn-field after a cloud has passed over it. "I know already what you would all like. We will make him a partner in the bank, Ghrimes and Frank together, and revive the old name. It shall be Melliship, Mortiboy, & Co., just as before. Eh, Grace? What a rage the old man would be in if he only knew it! Ho! ho!"

He laughed, with his jolly, mellow voice, as lightly as a boy, and with no sign of the emotion which had just possessed him, and left her. Mrs. Heathcote was gone to her own room. Lucy was sitting with the boy, who stared at her with great eyes, as a vision of another world. Taking him away, he drove back to Market Basing.

Mrs. Heathcote, too angry at first to speak, went back to the house and tried to think. Should she tell her husband? Should she remonstrate with Grace? What good would it do? They were both too obstinate to receive remonstrance with favor. She would only make things worse. Should she speak to Lucy? What use? So she had to keep it to herself, consoling herself with the thought that, after all, it was early days; perhaps Dick might propose again; perhaps Grace might not be always obdurate; perhaps Frank Melliship would "do something." Nevertheless, it was a cruel blow to overhear the rejection of half a million of money.

In the evening of the same day, Polly,

not without a good deal of misgiving and consultation with her mother, went up to the villa, in order to have it out with her husband. She resolved for herself to assume an aggressive attitude, and meditated a line of action which she considered would prove most effective with Dick. First, she put on all her best things; then she stuck a pistol—it was only an old single-barrelled thing which she had by her—in her pocket; and under her shawl she carried the family carving-knife. Then she walked boldly over the bridge which arched the river, half a mile above the villa, stepped across the fields, and knocked at Dick's door.

The proprietor of the house opened it.

"I thought you would turn up to-night. Pray come in, Polly. We will talk inside."

He spoke with so much politeness that Polly smelt mischief; but she followed without saying a word. He led the way to the smoking-room, where sat little Bill in his gorgeous attire.

"Who's that boy?" asked Polly.

"We'll come to him directly," said Dick.

"Now, Polly, the game's played out, and you'd better throw up the cards."

"What do you mean, Dick? If you think I'm going to be murdered quietly, you're just mistaken; so see here!"

She took out her pistol and carving-knife, and, standing with the table between them, brandished the weapons in his face with the air of a heroine at the Adelphi.

"Pretty toys, very pretty toys," said her husband. "No, Polly; I'm not going to murder you. As an old friend, I should perhaps advise you to make tracks. But, after all, you needn't do that, because you are quite certain to be followed."

She stared at him, wondering, with a sinking heart, what was to follow.

"Carry your memory back twelve years and three-quarters. Is it done?"

"It is. What little lark are you up to now, Dick?"

"What do you see?"

"I see you and me walking up the aisle of St. Pancras' Church."

"St. Pancras' Church. Very good indeed. Now carry your memory two years and three-quarters or so farther on. Where are we on a certain Monday about this time?"

She assumed a stubborn and sulky air; but she turned pale, notwithstanding.

"I don't know. How am I to remember so long ago?"

"You need not remember unless you like, you know. Well, let us have another question, and I have done. Carry your memory back to Limehouse Church, two years before the St. Pancras business."

This time she reeled as if she had been struck. For a space she did not answer.

Then she murmured with dry lips,—

"Prove it—prove it. You can't do it."

"Polly, the game's up. It's all come out. I'm trying now to find out the best way of getting rid of my marriage without, if you fall in with my views, bringing you before a court of law. Because you see, Polly, you've committed a very pretty bigamy. Bowker was alive when you married me, and you knew it. I can prove it. He's alive now!"

Polly let the pistol and carving-knife drop, and fell down on her knees moaning and crying.

"O Dick, Dick! I married you because I loved you. I did indeed; I did indeed! And I married the other man because I thought you were dead. Believe me, Dick; oh, believe me and forgive me!"

She was serious in her grief at heart, because Dick represented money and ease to her. Besides, in her way, her coarse, rough way, she really loved the man.

"Forgive you?" said Dick. "I don't quite understand what you mean by forgiving. I'll forgive you fast enough as soon as we're divorced: not a moment before, if you pray on your knees from this till midnight. Get up, Polly, and don't be playing-acting. Before your own son too."

"My son! She started up as if she had been shot. "My son! Oh, then! now I see who has done the mischief."

"Your son, Polly. Flint's son; not mine at all, you know. Look at him, and tell me what you think of him."

She seized the boy, who was trembling with terror, and held him under the lamp to look at him.

"Uncle Dick," he cried, "don't let her have me."

"He's my boy, he's my son. I shall take him away."

"No you don't, Polly. That's one of my conditions. Prisoners are not allowed, remember, to have their children in jail with them. Now, listen to me. For the present, and until I have decided what to do, you go away from Market Basing. I don't care where you go to. My lawyers will give you a pound a week to live on: always understand that it is only for the present. You tell no one here anything: if you do, you go to jail the next day. The boy remains with me. You write out to-morrow morning and give me a full confession, stating that you knew Bowker to be alive when you married me."

"I won't," cried the woman. "And I'll have my boy."

"That is what you will do," said Dick, unmoved. "If you break through any part

of these conditions, you know the consequences. The whole story of your life is known to me. Your eight years in London, Polly, what do you think of that? Every thing will be published in open court, and you will go off to jail for a couple of years or ten years; and where will you be when you come out?"

"I'll kill Mother Kneebone," she hissed.

"That's as you please. Do any thing you like with that old lady; but you will be hanged if you do, you know."

Polly wavered, and loosened her hold of the child, who instantly slipped behind Dick's legs for protection.

"Here is money to take you to London. Here is the address of the lawyers, to whom you will go for your weekly allowance. I shall write to them to-night. If you do not appear here before midday to-morrow to make your written confession, I shall write to them to take out the warrant that will send you to prison. Now go."

She took the paper and the money, and went away without a word or sign.

CHAPTER XL

POLLY went home to her mother. The dear old lady, in spite of Polly's assertion, had heard the truth about the ducking, and rejoiced, because it gave her daughter, as she thought, an opportunity of threatening reprisals.

Before she left on her errand of frightening Dick, her mother advised her.

"Don't you be afraid, Polly; he can't kill you. He calls himself a gentleman, so I suppose he won't beat you. You stick up to him. Tell him you'll blare it all over the town. Threaten him, my gal. Don't never let out that you're afraid of him. If he won't come down with hush-money to keep it dark, tell him you're agoin' to git a warrant out against him for your own protection. That's the way, Polly. Give me my drops handy, against you come back."

Presently her daughter returned, but pale, startled, and faint.

"It's all up, mother," she murmured.

"What's all up, Poll? You ain't been such a fool as to let out that you was afraid, have you?"

"It's no use being afraid or not, now. It's all up, mother, I tell you. What you always prophesied has come. He has found out about the other two."

"Polly! the other two? Both on 'em?"

"Both. Mother Kneebone told him. No one else could. No one else knew,

unless he found out for himself. Oh, he's a devil — he's a devil!"

"Who's Mother Kneebone?"

"The woman as had the boy. Dick's got the boy now. Says he means to keep him. I don't want the brat, I'm sure."

"The woman who had the boy," snarled her mother. "The woman that had the secret that you wouldn't tell your own mother. Serves you right, Polly, — serves you right, for not telling me every thing. Why did you let Mrs. Kneebone know about yourself at all?"

"She knew all along. It's no use singing out, mother. It's all up, I tell you. I shall go to London, and you must go to the union."

The old woman fell back moaning on her pillow. As her head touched it, there was a chink of money.

"My money!" cried Polly, brightening up. "My money. Let's see how much there is."

Her mother clutched the bag from under her head, and held it tight: not tight enough, however, in her old hands to save it from her daughter, who snatched it from her grasp after a brief and unequal contest.

It was a stocking; and in the toe lay all, or nearly all, the money she had got from Dick, except what she had spent in dress.

Polly counted it out. There were fifty-five pounds, all in sovereigns. She put back fifty into the stocking, which she carefully placed in her own pocket. Then she pulled out a purse, containing fourpence in coppers and a few shillings, put four of the sovereigns in it, and gave the remaining one back to her mother, who lay back in the bed, moaning and cursing — now loud, now soft — like a gale at sea.

"Oh! that I ever had a daughter," groaned the old woman. "Oh! I wish you'd never been born. To take and send me to the union. Oh! I'm sorry that ever I saw your face. Oh! I wish I had drowned you when you was a baby, as I wanted to. To let her old mother go on the parish! I wish you was smothered! I wish you was dead! I wish you was transported! I wish you was hanged! I wish you was blind, and deaf, and dumb, and full of aches and pains! I do!"

She stopped, not for want of ejaculations, for her quiver was full of them, but for want of breath.

Polly, who was comparatively accustomed to these outbreaks, calmly proceeded to undress, with the design of going to bed. When her mother choked, she lifted her up, and patted her on the back to bring her round.

"You've had a good long spell out of the

union, considering, mother; so you may as well make up your mind to go in quietly. Why, you must be past seventy now. It'll be good for you to have the chaplain coming round with his nice talk, and the services on Sunday. You've been a wicked old hussy, you know; and it may be the making of you, after all."

"I'm not so bad as you," cried the old woman, mad with rage. "You pepper and salt dra! you bag of wickedness! you, you—black, brazen, blaring, pitch-fire tom-cat!"

Polly heeded not. She had let down her hair, and was looking at herself in her glass. Obedient to feminine instincts, the first use she had made of the money which Dick had given her was to buy a looking-glass. She saw a large coarse face—coarse through drink—with thick lips. Her nose, which had been straight and well-formed, was puffy. This was through drink. Her forehead was swollen and red. Drink had left its mark. Her eyes alone remained—deep, large, limpid, dark blue.

"The boy has got my eyes," she murmured with a sigh, thinking of days when she had attractions enough to catch the calf-love of young Dick Mortiboy.

Then she went to bed, her mother pursuing her with execrations as she climbed the narrow stairs. They are not written down here, because they were unparliamentary, and unbecoming the gentle character of woman, from whose lips *nisi nisi* *lene* ought to proceed.

Early in the morning she came down again, shook up the old woman—not unkindly—and began putting her things together.

"Look here, mother, I must go to London, you know, because else I shall have to go to prison; so it can't be helped. You've got one sovereign already. I'll give you five more—come. That'll carry you on for a bit; and I'll tell Mrs. Smith's Amelarrann to come in and look after you. Let's part friends."

The old woman clutched the money, and Polly went away without those tender wishes and embraces which some parents lavish upon their departing children.

She was dressed in all her finery, to save the trouble of carrying the things, and had the rest of her belongings in a single bag, which she carried herself.

She went straight to the villa. Dick was already up, though it was only eight o'clock, and was waiting for her.

"Now, then," she said cheerfully, "if I've got to write things down, I'd better begin. No; I won't write. I never can write decent. You shall write, Dick, and

I will sign. Bless you! mother always said you'd find out some day."

Dick got the notes with which the lawyers had furnished him for reference, and sat down meekly to write at her dictation. Walking up and down, she began her narrative.

In a clear voice, in a free and easy flowing style, which would have done honor to me, the novelist, she recounted the events of her life, from her marriage with Mr. Bowker to her marriage with Mr. Flint. No motive assigned, no psychological doublings, no excuses offered, nor attempt to extenuate. Plain matter-of-fact statement. At the death of the dear departed saint, Mr. Flint, she stopped.

"I'm afraid, Mrs. Bowker," said Dick, "that we have not quite finished. There are still eight years."

"Two years I was at Market Basing, in service."

"That leaves six."

"I sha'n't tell you what I did in those six years."

"Perhaps you will let me write, and you can sign."

Dick took the notes, and rapidly wrote in as few words as possible, the story of those six years. Then Polly took the manuscript from his hands, and read it all through without blushing.

"Before I sign it, I want to put in something for myself."

"You are not in a position to make conditions."

"Then I want to ask a question. What are you going to do with this?"

"For the present, I am going to lock it up in my own safe."

"And not going to show it to any one? Oh! then it's all right. Hand me the pen, Dick. You're not the boy, my handsome Dick, to send an old friend to prison, because she loved you. There, Dick, you are free now. Shake hands with your old Polly."

Dick held out his hand. Polly threw her arms round his neck, and kissed him with a tear in her eye.

Then she went away. On the way to town, she formed a project. It was wild, perhaps, but bold: in the highest degree impudent and shameless; but it had the merit of possessing genius.

But first to Mrs. Kneebone's.

Paragon Place looked exactly as it had done when she had brought the baby ten years before, and left it to Mrs. Kneebone's fostering care. In the court, there were the children playing just as when she had been there last; the same squalor, the same dirt. At the entrance stood a figure she did not remember, with

the shape of an old man, and the face of a boy, leaning on a crutch, looking up Gray's Inn Road. It was Thoozy, standing there on the chance of seeing little Bill pass by. For Thoozy's ideas of the outer world were limited. In spite of his occasional studies in the "Daily Telegraph," he had never, by any experience of his own, arrived at a personal knowledge of any outer world except that of the heart of London. The world to him was a long succession of streets. Little Bill, taken from one Paragon Place, was, in Thoozy's mind, transported to another; perhaps a finer and more wealthy street. On warm days he hobbled to the entrance of the court, and planted himself where, should his old friend by any lucky chance come by, he could not fail of seeing him.

Thoozy turned round to see where the lady in black silk—he knew the faces of the church visitors: she was not a deaconess or a sister of mercy—was going to. She went straight to Mrs. Kneebone's. The door of the hospitable mansion stood open as was its wont, and the lady walked in. Thoozy gave one more look up and down the road. No little Bill. Then he turned back, limped down the court—rheumatics being bad in this early autumn weather—and followed the visitor. She went into the nursery, where Mrs. Kneebone was employed among her tender charges. She shut the door. Thoozy limped in after her, and looked through the keyhole, listening.

Mrs. Kneebone raised her head to see who was thus uncereemoniously intruding on her privacy. In her first confusion, she dropped the baby which was on her knees. The child fell back upon its bed; and, as it instantly went sound asleep, was probably not much the worse for its fall. A special Providence looks after the lives of babies and young children, its interposition being nowhere so clearly marked as in baby farms and on board passenger ships.

"Lord bless my soul!" she exclaimed, rushing forward with effusion, and holding out her hands. "Why, it's Polly Tresler. Polly, my dear soul, and how are you, and what's got you all this time not to drop a line to your old, old friend?"

Thoozy outside, laid down his crutch, and executed a short dance, more agile perhaps, than might have been expected of one so decayed. Then he applied his eye to the keyhole again. The court was quiet, and the voices were shrill, so that he heard as well as saw.

"Now, don't let's have none of your blarney, Mother Kneebone. So drop it. Where's my boy?"

"Where's little Bill?" cried the woman,

in a tone of the deepest surprise. "Where's little Bill? Why, where should he be? Didn't you send for him yourself, but Tuesday was a fortnight? And paid his bill and all?"

"I never sent for him."

"You never sent for him! Now, Polly, you always was one to crack a joke. A gentleman came himself to fetch the boy: said he was to pay for what there might be owing for him. You know, Polly, though I never would press you, I wrote as there was five and thirty shillings due. So I told him, and he paid me honorable, and he gave me—what was it he gave me, now?—fifteen shillings besides. Two pound ten in all, because he said the boy looked so well an' arty. And you know well, Polly, you know the soft heart of your old Kneebone, as couldn't abear to see the boy suffer; so many's the shillin' he cost me out of my pocket to keep him decent. Ax Thoozy if he didn't. Well, and the gentleman"—

"A tall, big man, with a black beard?"

"Tall and big he was, surely. And a black beard? Yes. With a leg. O Polly, my dear! a beautiful leg of his own. Which if he's your fourth, Polly, and not to deceive you, my dear, for worlds, it's a happy woman you ought to be."

Polly sat down on the only chair of the room, and stared.

"But what did you tell him about me?"

"Tell him? Now, Polly, do you think I'd tell him any thing? Do you think I'd do it? Not for pounds, Polly. And how well and fine you're looking, to be sure. Most as young as you did ten years ago."

"He didn't ask no questions?"

"And he did, though. Asked if the boy was happy. Bill—O Polly! what a boy that is, and as like you as two peas, though a trifle thin in the face; 'cos, do what I would, he never did eat enough—he ups and he says that he won't leave his old mother. Reg'lar made me cry, he did, the dear. Then the gentleman—him with the leg—he says, 'Mrs. Kneebone, you're a good woman, and the Lord will reward you.'"

"That I swear he didn't," cried Polly, knowing that Dick was by no means likely to make any such pious remark.

"Well, then, he said something very much like it; and asked a lot more questions. Said he wondered why I kep' that idle, good-for-nothing vagabond, Thoozy, about the place. What a leg he have, to be sure!"

"Who's Thoozy?"

"A baby what I never got paid for. A boy grewed up here who won't work. Ah, Polly! I've had a deal of trouble to keep little Bill from being led into bad ways by

that Thoozy. But I've always had a soft heart, and I couldn't abide to send the poor boy adrift on the streets, and him on crutches and all. So you see, I lets him stay on, bad as he is. And I do hope you won't find little Bill none the worse for his company."

"Oh!" whispered Thoozy. "I'll be even with you for this. Won't I?"

"Then you didn't tell him nothing at all?" said Polly, staggered.

"Not a syllable — not a word — not a thing, Polly, s'help me. And you haven't shook hands yet with your old friend as knowed you down at Poplar, when you married Bowker, and knows all your little buzzom secrets. Can't you trust your Kneebone, my dear?"

Polly got up, and shook out her skirts.

"He finds out every thing," she murmured. "He knows it all. He's dreadful masterful. He's a devil — he's a devil!"

"Who knows every thing, Polly? not Bowker?"

"No. Nobody you know, Mother Kneebone. Well, I shall go. Good-by."

"Don't go just yet, Polly. Stand a trifle for your old" —

"Oh, drat the old friend! Well, will half a crown be any good; because I ain't too rich? Here you are, then. Good-by."

"Good-by, deary; and give me news of my little Bill. If he sends his love to his old mother, be sure and let me have it. Ah! he *was* a boy, that boy; he *was* a boy!"

"I suppose he was," said Polly, "if he wasn't a girl. Good-by, then."

She lingered, woman-like, to look at the babies, and Thoozy noiselessly crept out, and resumed his old place at the entrance of the court.

Presently Polly came out again.

"How d'ye do, Polly Tresler?" cried a squeaking voice in the passage.

She gathered up her skirts, and looked round.

"How d'ye do, Polly Tresler? Don't you remember me? I'm Thoozy. Lord bless me! I know you as well as if it was only yesterday. I remember your bringing little Bill to Mother Kneebone's."

This was, unhappily for Methusalem's credit as a truth-teller, a deliberate lie. He remembered nothing about it, though he did remember perfectly well having acted for a year or two as little Bill's dry nurse. For in early life the poor little wizen-faced cripple had developed a genius, almost matronly, in the management of babies; and, on the strength of it, had been retained on the establishment in the capacity of nurse, until, by mere force of character and his fortunate discovery, he succeed-

ed in promoting himself to the position of chief resident physician and real master of the hospital.

"Oh! you're Thoozy, are you? And what do you mean by speaking to a lady?" said Polly, looking at him with astonishment.

"Because you are a lady, a real lady, and nothin' but a lady, silk stockings and all. Oh! I knows a lady when I sees one. Sorry you didn't speak to me first, instead of Mother Kneebone; 'coz I suppose she has been a gammoning of you."

Polly started.

"Look here, you boy — you little, withered-up imp — you miserable little rickety devil — if you tell me lies, I'll break every bone of your wretched little crooked body. Just you tell me right out all about it."

It will be seen that Polly was roused to wrath by Thoozy's suggestion of "gammon." Thoozy gave one look of rage and spite.

"I'll be even with both of 'em," he muttered. Then he smoothed out his face, and proceeded to reply.

A soft answer turneth away wrath.

"Don't be hard upon me, missus. I'll tell you all I know. Last Wednesday fortnight, a swell comes here when Bill and me was havin' our school in the court. I used to teach Bill, whenever the old woman gave him enough to eat. You can't teach a boy when he's starvin' for food, now, can you? That day Bill picked up a bloater, and we had it between us for breakfast. In the afternoon the swell comes in.

"Where's Mrs. Kneebone?" he says, as grand as you please.

"She's in there," says I.

"Where's little Bill?" says he.

"What little Bill?" says I.

"Polly Tresler's little Bill," says he.

"Here he is," says I.

"Oh!" says he.

Polly's face became scarlet, a premonitory squall of a brewing storm.

Thoozy took breath, and went on.

"Then he goes in, and we goes in after him. Offers Mother Kneebone five pounds for information. Kneebone, she pockets the dibs, and she begins.

"Flint's the father of the boy," says she. 'Flint was Polly's third. Polly's second I don't know, 'coz I never see him, and she wouldn't never tell me about him. And her first husband was Mr. Bowker, and he's livin' now; and I know where to put my 'ands upon him this very moment, if you please, for another five pound. Polly, she ran away from him because she' —

"O — h — h!" It was as the roar of a tigress, and Polly turned from the boy, and rushed back to the house. Thoozy saw her

go in, and looked up and down Gray's Inn Road—not for Bill this time, but for a policeman.

He saw one providentially fifty yards down the road, and hobbled to him as fast as his rheumatics would let him.

"Come up here," he cried, taking the man by the arm, "there'll be murder done, if you don't come quick."

The policeman followed him.

They were not a bit too soon. Polly, with flaming eyes and scarlet cheeks, had the old woman by the throat on the floor. She was kneeling on her chest, beating her head upon the boards, mad with rage. In a few minutes more, the miserable old woman would have been done to death. The policeman dragged her off. He was a big, powerful man; but he had to use all his strength, and pinned her against the wall. Then he secured his prisoner by a dodge well known to London policemen: seized her wrist with his right hand, and twisted his left arm round it upon her shoulder. The prisoner may burst away if he likes, but will break his arm in the endeavor. Polly struggled furiously for a minute or two, and then gave in. She had still sense enough left to see that the battle had better be given over; and, for obvious reasons, she held her tongue.

Presently, the old woman began to revive. Thoozy fetched cold water, and threw it over her—a good lot at a time, because he knew how much she disliked that form of fluid. She sat up, and looked round.

"You've got to come up to Clerkenwell to-morrow. So mind that," said the policeman. "You boy, bring her along. And now, come away. If you'll promise to go quiet," he said, when they got in the open air, "I'll let your arm free."

"I'll go quiet," said Polly.

So, holding her gently by the wrist, the guardian of the peace led Polly away, and committed her to the custody of the law, followed by those of the population who had the shining hours idle on their hands, and were naturally anxious for amusement.

Polly had a bad and uncomfortable night. Mrs. Kneebone was left with a severe headache, and a shaking of the nerves so violent that it forced her to imbibe too much fortifying medicine, inasmuch that she fell down among the babies, and slept there. Methusalem administered the feeding bottles; took away the old woman's matches to prevent accidents with fire; and climbed to his own miserable bed, where he went to sleep, chuckling over the pious fraud by which, at one and the same time, he had paid off old and new scores. It may be remarked that his first thought had only been to reveal a portion of Mrs. Kneebone's four-

beries, in order that shame, with perhaps a little personal chastisement, might fall upon her. But Polly's allusions to his own physical defects carried him a little beyond the limits of a pure practical joke, and very nearly ended fatally for both Polly and his old woman.

In one or two of the papers there appeared, two days after, under the head of police news, a short account, headed, "A Row in a Baby-farm," which described how a woman, calling herself Mrs. Flint, a widow, of no occupation, was charged with violently assaulting an old woman named Kneebone, the keeper of a notorious baby-farm. Evidence being heard, the worthy magistrate, without going into the antecedents of the prisoner, against whom the police had nothing to allege, remarked that it was clearly a very brutal assault upon an aged and infirm woman. He cautioned the prisoner very seriously on her ungovernable temper; remarked that it was well for her that the principal witness was able to appear that morning to give evidence; and sentenced her to a penalty of £5 fine or a month's imprisonment, with hard labor. The money was paid on the spot.

Thoozy led home his old woman, not sympathizing much with her shaky confession, which he attributed more to the strong drink than the fright she had had.

"How did she go for to find it out?" said Mrs. Kneebone. "You little devil, you told her."

"Never told her nothing. How should I know who she was? Perhaps she met the big swell in the road. I thought I saw him pass," said the mendacious one.

CHAPTER XLI

AFTER Mr. Eddrup's confession, Frank met him almost daily. The old man used to go to his court every morning at ten, and sit in his office—a single room—which was like the gate of an Eastern city, inasmuch as he sat there and administered justice. Haroun Al Raschid could not have been more just, Saladin was not more merciful. Thither came the women with their quarrels: "Forgive, forgive," he said. Thither the men out of work brought their tales of disappointment and privation: to these he lent money, or pointed the way to work. Here he received his rents, which amounted to a goodly sum, and devised means for the improvement of his dwellings. The court was a model. All the houses but two belonged to him. Gradually, by slow degrees, they had been pulled

down, and rebuilt in flats, with whatever improvements Mr. Eddrup and his builder could ever devise. The property paid him about two and a half per cent. Side by side with his stood the other two houses—squalid, mean, and decayed. They paid a good fifteen per cent to the man—he was a leader at Exeter Hall, and knew nothing about his property except that it paid—to whom they belonged. Mr. Eddrup did what he could even here,—persuaded the people to be clean, and made no difference between them and his own tenants.

One thing everybody knew: they might rob their landlord, refuse to pay his rent, maltreat him. All these, in the old times, they had done. He would never prosecute or use the law. He received his own by their good grace. Strange to say, he hardly ever lost by it. Old inhabitants of the court—especially one man, who had been the worst of the flock, and was shrewdly suspected of having personally robbed Mr. Eddrup, one dark night—protected his interest. Nobody was allowed to shoot the moon; public opinion was against it. Nobody told lies about back rents and the reasons for asking delay; public experience had proved it useless. Truth, when it does as much good, is much more pleasant to tell than a falsehood.

At one o'clock, Mr. Eddrup left his office, and generally went away home—that is to Skimp's—where he sometimes sat in the dingy drawing-room, but oftener sat in his own single room, reading or writing, till dinner-time. After dinner, he went back regularly to the court, when he lectured in the "chapel," as they called it, on some evenings, talking freely on all kinds of subjects connected with those branches of social science most useful and interesting to his flock; sometimes taught in a night school; sometimes paid visits among the people.

A scholar, a gentleman, wrecked in early life, he had the courage to make of his miserable fate a reason for a life of philanthropy and self-denial. What he might have been, had his power of resisting temptation always been as great, who can tell?

He talked freely at this time to Frank; told him of his hopes—they were all centred in that small row of houses where he spent most of his day; and of his fears—they were all for the future of his people when he should be gone.

"I might leave the property in trust; but in a few years the letter of the will would be executed, and the spirit neglected. A man can do no good after his death. Better let the money go, and trust that the work may go on. I have seen so much of charitable trusts, that I know the evil they produce; how they pauperize the people,

and take away their self-respect. I will have none of them. If only, Mr. Melliship, some man like you would take up the work."

"I cannot," said Frank. "I am one of those who only approve of good things, and stand idly by."

"There is Silver, the acrobat. He speaks well; but he would make the place a hot-bed of religious enthusiasm. Nevertheless, he has a burning spirit, and will some time or other become a preacher. I will speak to him about leaving his profession."

"Make him take his daughter away too, then; and Patty has no business with that kind of work at all."

"Poor girl," said Mr. Eddrup. "When her father asked my advice, I had none to give him. Then she came herself. She said she knew nothing which she could do. The family kettle is very small, but it was hard to keep it going. I let her have her own way. But she is good and modest. Don't tell me she is not, Mr. Melliship, because I love the child. I have seen her grow up."

"I think you love all the people about you."

"I do," he said, simply; "God knows I do. I have been drawn to them by the thousand ties that struggle and endeavor engender. They were ignorant; I had knowledge. They are poor; I have money—enough, at least, to help them. They desired good things; I could show them the way to some good things. Never think that the poor are ungrateful; never think that they are forgetful; never believe that they are in any respect, whether of good feeling, of delicacy, of forbearance, inferior to yourself. Manners are but conventionalism. In my court there are men and women with as good manners, as far as consideration for others and unselfish labor go, as you will see in women and men of the highest culture in England. They are not better than the rich, I suppose; but they are as good. And, remember, they are tempted tenfold as much. Tempted! Good God! When I think of myself, my miserable fall, when I see these people resist, I am fain to go away and weep by myself for shame, and cry for deliverance from the body of this death."

He was silent for a while. They were walking in the garden of Granville Square, which they had all to themselves.

"Love them? Of course I love them. I know all their secrets. They bring me all their troubles. They tell me all their sins. They confess to me. St. Paul says it is good for men to confess to one another. He means not that priests have any thing

to do with it; the great-hearted preacher was too wise for that: but he knew that when the soul is burdened with sin and misgiving, the mere telling is a relief and a safeguard. We sin, we fall into temptation, we fall into evil, our minds are clouded. As prayer is a purification, so confession is an unburdening. In the darkness, evil visions rise, and horrible forms dance before our eyes. We let in the light by confession: they vanish and die away. St. Paul knew what he was talking about. Mr. Melliship, my heart is full to-day. Come and hear me next Sunday evening. I have a thing to say to the people which must not longer be delayed."

Frank knew very well what the thing would be. He went, with Patty and her father, prudently silent as to what was to happen.

It was a crowded night. Every bench was full; the women and the men hushed with an expectancy of something about to happen. Patty and Frank, with the boy, took their seats, as usual, on the last bench. They were used to Frank by this time, and only supposed that he "kept company" with Patty, who was known to be a good girl, of eccentric habits of dress, which she gratified, with her father's sanction, at the music hall. In other words, her profession was no secret; and she was looked upon with considerable respect as a public character of unblemished reputation.

They had the usual hymn, — one of those quiet old Wesleyan psalms, different from the jubilant strains of modern Anglican hymns with which we now-a-days proclaim a confidence and exultation we are very far from feeling. Not a triumphal song, not a meaningless rapture set to a pretty music, not a vain and false celebration of an unreal New City; not a lying wish to behold beauties which would pall upon us in a week, just as much as the Crystal Palace; but a hymn in a minor key, attuned to the sadness that always fills the poor man's heart, — one that they could sing with fervor, because it belonged so fully to themselves.

Then Mr. Eddrup rose, and, contrary to his usual practice, began to speak himself, without asking if any had aught to say.

He commenced by reminding them that he had been among them for forty years. He told how his desire had been to communicate what little knowledge he had, and to do good, as best he might, with what little means he had. He reminded them of the duties of self-reliance and self-respect. He showed, for the thousandth time, how ignorance and sin are interwoven with all human suffering; how the former can be slowly removed, and the latter is

generally a departure from the laws of nature. And then, with a great effort, he raised himself erect, threw back the long white hair off his face, and told them all his story.

Not with apologies; not with excuses; with no embellishments. The plain, black, ugly story: the story of violated trust and ruined honor, of disgrace, of prison. He hid nothing.

"Such I was," he said. "This is my history. I have always meant to tell it. I put it off, half in cowardice, half because I thought I would wait until you learned to love me — till your hearts yearned towards me, even as mine does now to you. I think I have never till now won your perfect confidence. Only of late has it been impressed upon me that some of you look up to me with reverence and affection. To me — to a convicted thief! Therefore I could wait no longer. My children, I have seen most of you grow up; you have been in our schools; I have taught you: you are in very truth my children. You must respect me no longer. I am not worthy. I am meaner than the meanest — lower than the lowest. I am a convicted thief.

"Years ago, I dreamed of this night. I pictured to myself how I should feel, standing before you all, with shamed face, telling you all that I am nothing better than a convicted thief.

"Respect me no longer. I have never been able to respect myself. Tell your little ones that the old man with white hair was not fit to sit among them; point your fingers out at him as he goes down the street; call after him, hoot him. He has been an impostor, a hypocrite, a deceiver. He pretended to be, —

"No, my children, no; I am no hypocrite. I am a coward; because I should have told you all this long years ago. No hypocrite. Believe me, in this my solemn confession, that I repent and have repented. I have set myself to hide from the world, and work in this little corner, the servant of you all. To repent. Before you all, and in the face of God, in whose presence I stand, I say that I repent, and am heartily sorry. Shall I say more? Nay, for I would not that you think I should excuse myself. Let me have your pity — your pity, since I can no longer have your love. And pray for me — pray for me."

He sank upon his knees, his head in his hands, resting against the handrail; and, as he ceased, the women began to lament, and to cry aloud for sympathy and pity. Down the rugged cheeks of the men the great tears fell unchecked. Some of them sobbed and choked. All looked bewil-

The Communist Party is the only party which means to change the government. It is called - The Communist Party. It has

imitating, unconsciously, the example of Dante and several other distinguished "makers," he has embodied in a vision the whole sum of his philosophy. Frank has been pretending to listen. The good-nature which prevents him from yawning in the honest captain's face also obliges him to come, from time to time, and pay Mr. Bowker a visit, in order to give him pleasure. I, who yield to no man in the quality of good-nature, have ruthlessly cut out the whole of the captain's poem, which is among the records from which this history is compiled, solely because it might bore my readers. I am far from saying the work is not remarkable in many ways: there is a flavor of the briny in it, a smell of pickled pork, occasional whiffs of rum, a taste of the pannikin, the breath of the ocean. Nautical metaphors alone are used — seafaring similes.

We are on board ship, and the wind is whistling through the shrouds. But — but — truth compels me to add that the poet's diction is commonplace, and his thoughts are not always exalted. Why do we not consider the varieties of the human mind in our estimate of poetry? There are gradations of intellect, like terraces. Instead of measuring a newly-fledged poet with a stupid, Procrustean bed of criticism, reducing all to one standard, why not make an effort to classify intellectual produce, as merchants classify colonial produce? I believe there are, in the single article of sugar alone, about twelve gradations from treacle to crystal. Suppose we made twelve grades or degrees in poetry? Our greatest poets would belong to the twelfth — the supreme degree which embraces all the rest. As every poet must have some brains, if only a thimbleful, it follows that he must have a very large mass of mankind beneath him. Martin F. Tupper, for instance, might be numbered one, or perhaps two on account of some gleams of scholarship. Capt. Bowker would belong to the first grade, without any possibility of promotion at all.

"So, Mr. Melliship, there's all my ideas for you. When I get more, I stick them in. As I go on living, the poem will go on growing — consequently improving."

"Do not your ideas change sometimes?"

"Never. When I get an idea, Mr. Melliship, it isn't a flash in the pan, like some people's. My ideas take me first of all unawares. They generally begin, like a toothache, when I least expect them. Perhaps when I feel a little buffy, in the morning; mayhap, after an extra go of grog the night before. Then one comes all of a sudden. I turn it over, and think

it out. I'm rayther a slow thinker; but I'm an uncommon sure one, and I never let it go. I don't read much, except the newspaper; so that I've got a great advantage over most poets, all my ideas are my own. I don't steal them and alter them. I let 'em grow. It takes me a long time — perhaps months — to work an idea into shape; but when I have got him, there he is, put into the poem neat and ship-shape, preserved for cure, like a bit of salt beef in a cask of brine. Woman, now — you remember the beautiful passage I read to you just now about woman?"

"Yes — yes — yes. Oh! don't take the trouble to read it again, Capt. Bowker," cried Frank hastily.

"A few lines to show my meaning," said the captain, clearing his throat. "Here we are. Now listen: —

" 'Woman is like a ship — new painted, gay,
Fresh holystoned and scraped, she sails away,
Manned by her captain. While the weather holds
The ship sails trim, the woman never scolds.
The dancing waves play on the starboard bow,
Her sails fill out, her pennants gaily flow;
The captain takes his thankful grog below.' "

"That's a good line, young man. That last is a very good line."

He read it over again, shaking his head slowly from side to side in admiration.

" 'Look where ahead the black clouds rise, and see
How changed the lines of ocean; on the lea
The rocks rise threatening. Furl the mainsail,
stow
All snug: here comes the tempest. Let her go.' "

"I leave out the next fifty lines, where I follow up the comparison of a good woman to a good ship. She weathers the storm. Then I go on to talk of a bad woman; and I end thus: —

" 'All lost — the ship obeys the helm no more.
She strikes — she sinks. Her voyages are o'er.' "

"Very fine," said Frank, — "very fine indeed."

"Yes; I flatter myself that there is good stuff there. They've compared woman to all sorts of things. Look here. Here's a bit I cut out of an old play: —

" 'A woman is like to — but stay —
What a woman is like, who can say?
She's like a rich dish
Of ven'son, or fish,
That cries from the table, "Come eat me!"
But she'll plague you, and vex you,
Distract and perplex you,
False-hearted, and ranging,
Unsettled and changing,
What, then, do you think she is like?
Like a sand? like a rock?
Like a wheel? like a clock? ' "

"Now, you know, it's all very fine. That's not my notion of a simile. Don't hurry about from one to another to show your cleverness. Stick to one. Woman is

like a ship, isn't she? Very well — there you are. Work it up, as I do. There's her hold, must be laden, or in ballast; a woman without ballast is like a cork on the water. Her head is the captain's cabin — only room for one. The captain is the man at the helm. As for the rigging, some of it's ornamental, some of it's useful. You've got the bunting, and you've got the sails. The sails is her petticoats, without which, d'ye see, she can't sail out of port; the bunting is her ribbons, because they all ships as well as women, sail better if they're proud of themselves. And as for her masts, her boats, her keel, her bowsprit, and her fokle, and all the rest of it — why, bless you! if I had time, I'd run through the whole and show you how the simile holds. Ah! it's a very delicate subject. Marriage, now. People will get married. Why? The Lord knows. I did myself once, and a pretty market I brought my pigs to. Ease and comfort? Quiet and tranquillity for composing? Not a bit of it. Morning, noon, and night went her tongue. It was, 'Jem, get this;' 'Jem, go there.' And if I didn't — squalls, I can tell you!"

"Well, but you were the man at the helm," said Frank, with a smile.

"Man at the helm! I might as well have been in the bows; she staid below all watches. She wouldn't answer the helm nohow. Never took no notice of the helm. Kept her own course. Never was such a craft. Neat to look at too. Painted rosy red in the bows; full in the lines, but clean cut, down about the stern; always neat and tidy in the gear. But come to command her — phew! — then you found out what a deceptive, headstrong, cranky, difficult vessel she was. Ah, well; it's fifteen years ago since I saw her."

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Don't trust any. Stick to yourself, and be happy. As for me, Mr. Melliship, I'm a fixture. Nothing can disturb me now. I'm in port. I defy the storms. To quote myself, I sing, —

" 'Laid up in dock, serene I shake my fist,
And fortune's storms may thunder as they list.' "

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The captain's arms dropped, and his face turned an ashy white. Frank laughed at first; but the poor man's distress was so great that his sense of the ludicrous was lost in pity.

"Found me out, has she?" he murmured.

"After fifteen years — 'Laid up in dock, serene' — No; that won't do. Mr. Melliship, wait a moment. Don't go and leave me in this pinch. Can't nothing be done? See her. After fifteen years, to go back to prison! It's more than I looked for. Tell me what to do. Help me to ride out the gale."

"There is nothing to be done," said Frank. "But perhaps you had better see her. Suppose she is not your wife, after all?"

"Stay with me. Stand by an old shipmate. Don't desert me, Mr. Melliship."

"But I can't interfere between you and your wife. Be brave, man. You ought not to be afraid of a woman."

"As an ordinary rule," said Capt. Bowker, clearing his throat, "there ain't a braver man going than me. Not another woman in the world I'm afraid of. But this one's an exception. You didn't know my Polly. I don't care for the rest of 'em, if they were all to come on together. But Polly's too much for any man."

There was a rustling of a dress on the stairs, and Frank waited for a moment.

A tall figure in black silk, with a thick veil, glided in. As Frank glanced at her, somehow he thought of Market Basing and Parkside.

"Don't sheer off," murmured the captain, in an ecstasy of terror.

But Frank stole softly out of the room, and closed the door, bringing the red-armed one down with him. She had followed

unconsciously, the example of
 and other distinguished
 embodied in a vision the
 of his philosophy. Frank has
 The good-nature
 them yawning in the
 they also obliges him to
 time, and pay Mr.
 in order to give him pleas-
 I have a good man in the quality
 have ruthlessly cut out the
 of the captain's poem, which is
 from which this his-
 I am far from saying
 is remarkable in many ways:
 of the briny in it, a smell
 of occasional whiffs of rum,
 a taste of the pain-kin, the breath of the
 ocean. None of metaphors alone are used

We are on board ship, and the wind is
 whistling through the rigging. But—but
 —truth compels me to add that the poet's
 device is commendable, and his thoughts
 are not always excited. Why do we not
 consider the varieties of the human mind
 in our estimate of poetry? There are
 gradations of intellect, like terraces. In-
 stead of measuring a newly-fledged poet
 with a *quintessential* bed of criticism,
 reducing all to one standard, why not
 make an effort to classify intellectual pro-
 ductions as merchants classify colonial pro-
 duces? I believe there are, in the single
 article of sugar alone, about twelve grad-
 ations from treacle to crystal. Suppose we
 make twelve grades or degrees in poetry?
 Our greatest poets would belong to the
 twelfth—the supreme degree which em-
 braces all the rest. As every poet must
 have some brains, if only a thimbleful, it
 follows that he must have a very large mass
 of material beneath him. Martin F. Tup-
 per, for instance, might be numbered one,
 or perhaps two on account of some gleams
 of sublimity. Capt. Bowker would be-
 long to the first grade, without any possi-
 bility of promotion at all.

"So, Mr. Mortiboy, there's all my ideas
 in. When I get more, I stick them
 in. As I go on living, the poem will go on
 growing—consequently improving."

"Do not your ideas change some-
 times?"

"Never. When I get an idea, Mr. Mel-
 lishup, it isn't a flash in the pan, like some
 people's. My ideas take me first of all un-
 awares. They generally begin, like a
 toothache, when I least expect them.
 Perhaps when I feel a little buffy, in the
 morning; maybe, after an extra go of
 grog the night before. Then one comes
 all of a sudden. I turn it over, and think

it out. I'm rather a slow thinker; but
 I'm an uncommon sure one, and I never
 let it go. I don't read much, except the
 newspaper; so that I've got a great advan-
 tage over most poets, all my ideas are my
 own. I don't steal them and alter them.
 I let 'em grow. It takes me a long time—
 perhaps months—to work an idea into
 shape; but when I have got him, there he
 is, put into the poem neat and ship-shape,
 preserved for cure, like a bit of salt beef
 in a cask of brine. Woman, now—you
 remember the beautiful passage I read to
 you just now about woman?"

"Yes—yes—yes. Oh! don't take the
 trouble to read it again, Capt. Bowker,"
 cried Frank hastily.

"A few lines to show my meaning,"
 said the captain, clearing his throat. "Here
 we are. Now listen:—

"Woman is like a ship—new painted, gay,
 Fresh holystoned and scraped, she sails away,
 Manned by her captain. While the weather holds
 The ship sails trim, the woman never scolds,
 The dancing waves play on the starboard bow,
 Her sails fill out, her pennants gaily flow;
 The captain takes his thankful grog below."

"That's a good line, young man. That
 last is a very good line."

He read it over again, shaking his head
 slowly from side to side in admiration.

"Look where ahead the black clouds rise, and see
 How changed the lines of ocean; on the lee
 The rocks rise threatening. Furl the mainsail,
 stow
 All snug: here comes the tempest. Let her go."

"I leave out the next fifty lines, where I
 follow up the comparison of a good woman
 to a good ship. She weathers the storm.
 Then I go on to talk of a bad woman; and
 I end thus:—

"All lost—the ship obeys the helm no more.
 She strikes—she sinks. Her voyages are o'er."

"Very fine," said Frank,—"very fine
 indeed."

"Yes; I flatter myself that there is good
 stuff there. They've compared woman to
 all sorts of things. Look here. Here's a
 bit I cut out of an old play:—

"A woman is like to—but stay—
 What a woman is like, who can say?
 She's like a rich dish
 Of ven'son, or fish,
 That cries from the table, 'Come eat me!'
 But she'll plague you, and vex you,
 Distract and perplex you,
 False-hearted, and ranging,
 Unsettled and changing,
 What, then, do you think she is like?
 Like a sand? like a rock?
 Like a wheel? like a clock?"

"Now, you know, it's all very fine.
 That's not my notion of a simile. Don't
 hurry about from one to another to show
 your cleverness. Stick to one. Woman is

like a ship, isn't she? Very well — there you are. Work it up, as I do. There's her hold, must be laden, or in ballast; a woman without ballast is like a cork on the water. Her head is the captain's cabin — only room for one. The captain is the man at the helm. As for the rigging, some of it's ornamental, some of it's useful. You've got the bunting, and you've got the sails. The sails is her petticoats, without which, d'y'e see, she can't sail out of port; the bunting is her ribbons, because they all ships as well as women, sail better if they're proud of themselves. And as for her masts, her boats, her keel, her bowsprit, and her fokale, and all the rest of it — why, bless you! if I had time, I'd run through the whole and show you how the simile holds. Ah! it's a very delicate subject. Marriage, now. People will get married. Why? The Lord knows. I did myself once, and a pretty market I brought my pigs to. Ease and comfort? Quiet and tranquillity for composing? Not a bit of it. Morning, noon, and night went her tongue. It was, 'Jem, get this;' 'Jem, go there.' And if I didn't, — squalls, I can tell you!"

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"Don't sheer off," murmured the captain, in an ecstasy of terror.

But Frank stole softly out of the room, and closed the door, bringing the red-armed one down with him. She had followed

Mrs. Bowker up the stairs, with intent to listen at the keyhole. Mrs. Skimp and her daughter were at the bottom, with the same laudable object.

"Now, Mrs. Skimp," said Frank, "no listening."

And he sat down on the bottom steps by way of precaution.

"O Jem!" cried Polly, falling on the captain's unresisting neck, and kissing his grizzled forehead — "O Jem! to think I should find you, and after so many years, and your dreadful cruel conduct. Oh, this is a blessed day!"

"How did you find me, Polly?" asked her husband.

"Went to Leggatt & Browne's, your old firm. The clerks told me. This is a blessed day!"

"D— the clerks," said the captain. "And why didn't you go before, if you wanted to find me?"

"Because I thought you were dead, Jem. I've wore black ever since in mourning for you. See here. They told me at Poplar that you was alive, and where to ask for you. Oh, what a joyful thing to find your husband after fifteen years!"

She pulled out her handkerchief, and began to weep, but not plentifully.

"Well, what's to be done now?" asked the captain.

"That's a pretty thing to say to your wife," she answered. "Done! What should be done? I've come to live with you."

"Oh!" groaned the captain.

"I'm not going to live in a boarding-house. How much money have you got?"

He named his modest income.

"That will do. We shall have lodgings. What's the name of the woman of the house?"

"Skimp."

She went to the head of the staircase, and called out, —

"Mrs. Skimp! You Mrs. Skimp! Come up here at once." Frank quietly went away.

"We're going to leave this to-day," said Polly. "A week's notice. Bring the bill in ten minutes. I'll pay it. And none of your extras for me."

"You don't stay in my house another hour," said the aggrieved Mrs. Skimp. "Cap'n Bowker, I'm ashamed of you. I pity you, I do. Paying attentions to my daughter too."

"Eh!" said Polly. "What's that?"

"I never did," said the captain, outraged and insulted. "They're all upon me, together. I never did. I'm—I'm—I'm DAMNED if I did! Mrs. Skimp, what do you mean by saying such things? And

you a married woman yourself, and know the misery of being married. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. I never looked at your daughter, even. I never look at any woman."

"You won't pay her any more attentions; for you shall come out of this place in quick sticks," said Mrs. Bowker. "How long will it take you to pack your things up?"

"Well," said the unresisting seaman, fairly overthrown by the logic of facts, "I think to do it comfortable, you know, it might take a couple of hours."

"Very well," said the lady. "You pack every thing up, — mind you don't leave nothing behind you in a place like this, — and I'll just go down to Poplar and let 'em know as I've found you, and I'll be back here before the two hours are up. This is a blessed day!"

She gave the captain one chaste salute, shot a look of anger at Mrs. Skimp, and marched out of the room.

CHAPTER XLIII.

ONE fine morning at this time, Dick Mortiboy said to his ward, when they were out for a ride together, —

"Bill, I do you the justice to believe that you don't care very much about your mother."

The boy shook his head.

"And you would not want to go away with her — to live with her, I mean?"

Little Bill's cheeks changed color, and he turned his blue eyes appealingly at Uncle Dick.

"Very well, my boy, then never say any thing about her."

The boy was mounted on an old pony that had been used occasionally to carry old Ready-money. It was very quiet and easy in its paces, and Dick had given his protégé a few lessons in horsemanship, before they had ventured so far into the country together.

Of course, in a gossiping, tittle-tattling little place like Market Basing, there was an abundance of rumors rife concerning the parentage and history of little Bill. Widely as some of these reports differed from others in many particulars, they were all agreed as to one essential: it was that he was young Ready-money's son. I have never heard that anybody connected the boy with Polly.

Now, I do not say that Dick Mortiboy's argument concerning his ward was sound or just: he argued thus: "A few months ago I was told this was my son. I had not

seen him. I did not love him. I was a poor man, and I contributed what I thought sufficient for his support. The boy had the reputation of being my son. Now I have seen him, and know that he isn't mine. I like him, and I'll take care that he gets some of the benefits he would have got if his mother's tale had been true."

It was rather from impulse than from reason that Dick Mortiboy had acted. He was big, and rough, and generous. He had taken the boy from Mrs. Kneebone's tender care, and brought him home with him. He had hardly thought of what he should do with him. He meant, after a time, to send him to school; for the boy was bright and sharp as a needle, and, till he talked, was quite a little gentleman in his new clothes.

As he looked down at the child's thin face and deep blue eyes, his heart grew soft. It seemed as if he had missed something all his life, which he was finding now. What he had missed were the influences of love: now they were upon him. He loved a woman. True, she did not love him; but she cared in a way for him. It was something to know that Grace loved him "as a brother,"—as girls are fond of saying when they mean that they feel a friendly interest in a man, but would rather not have him making love to them.

Then came the boy. His love for Dick was wonderful. His loyalty and obedience to what Dick told him, the pains he took to do every thing that Dick said was right, his confidence and trust,—all this touched Dick, and moved him; it was the first step upwards,—to something like repentance. Only as yet, the faintest glimmer, like the first gray streaks of light in the east.

So Dick Mortiboy rode along gently on the strip of grass by the side of the turnpike road, thinking of many things, when he became aware that his ward was calling out lustily,—

"Mikey O'Grady! Mikey O'Grady!"

The boy was in the middle of the road, some twenty yards behind. He had reined in his pony, and was addressing by name a ragged, shoeless, dust-covered tramp. Dick stopped his horse.

"Mikey O'Grady," the boy called out again.

"Shure enough it's me name, your honor," said the man, hat in hand.

"Don't you remember me, Mike?"

The boy took off his cap, and shook his light hair over his eyes.

The Irishman gave a yell of delight.

"It's little Bill," he cried.

Dick listened to this colloquy, and said nothing.

"You're going to London, Mike, ain't

you? Go to the old place, and find out Thoozy. You remember Thoozy, don't you? Well, then, give Thoozy my love; tell him I am very well and very happy, and—and I wish he was."

Poor little Bill's eyes began to fill with tears.

"Give him the message, my man," said Dick. "Tell him, too, that when I come to town I shall go and see him. Perhaps I shall have something for him. And here's something to help you on your way."

The Irishman promised, and went on his way. Dick said nothing till bedtime came, when he patted his ward on the head, and said,—

"Good boy, good boy. Another commandment, Bill. Never forget old friends. What is the whole duty of a boy?"

"Never steal, never tell lies, never swear, hold his jaw, do his work, go away from England, always be ready to fight, look out for shams, never be satisfied, never forget old friends. Ten of 'em now, Uncle Dick."

"That's a curious coincidence," said Uncle Dick.

On the morning after his refusal by Grace Heathcote, Dick Mortiboy went down to the bank full of his new purpose. It was to make George Ghrimes and Frank Melliship his junior partners in the concern. The foundry and the brewery would still be managed by Ghrimes for Dick's sole benefit; but he had made up his mind to rehabilitate Frank's fortunes, and reward the honest and able services of Ghrimes, by doing what he thought was to both a simple act of justice.

Young Ready-money was not an adept in the art of speechifying, and did not know exactly how to begin. He set forth his intention to Ghrimes in a sort of preamble about Frank.

"Ghrimes," he said, "I've been thinking things over a goodish deal of late, and I've got a proposal I want you to consider. When I was a boy, before I went away from the governor, if I had a friend to say a word for me and give me a hand, besides John Heathcote, it was my Uncle Melliship."

"He was a very good sort, poor man," said Ghrimes, guessing half of what was about to come from his employer.

"He was," Dick assented. "Well, Ghrimes," he went on, "they've got a sort of rough notion in those rough parts I lived in a good many years, that one good turn deserves another. The very roughest there act up to it. It is not a bad maxim, Ghrimes, anywhere. It seems to me that it is not affected by climate. My Uncle

Melliship did me many good turns. Now I am going to do his son one good turn: for I'm bound to help Frank. That's all clear, isn't it?"

Mr. Ghrimes nodded.

"Good. I knew you'd agree to all that. I've a word or two more to say before I've done. There's the man who greases the wheels, and there's a good many of 'em to grease of my affairs, who keeps every thing straight and square, and adds to the pile I've got already."

Mr. Ghrimes turned rather red.

"That's you, Ghrimes. You see it. Well, I think I'm bound to do something for you."

The manager of Dick Mortiboy's business looked at the pattern of the carpet, and said nothing. He had not had time to find words yet.

"What can we do best for all of us? The old bank was Melliship, Mortiboy, & Co. Why not revive the old title by taking Frank and you into partnership? — Mortiboy, Melliship & Ghrimes."

"Never alter the name of a bank," said Ghrimes. "The most unlucky thing that can be done. Remember Snow's bank, in the Strand."

"Well, we'll have it Melliship, Mortiboy, & Co. I don't quite know how these things are done; but I suppose there will be something to sign, written in a big hand."

"A deed of partnership would have to be prepared, of course."

"Very well. You will do all that. Arrange it with Battiscombe."

Dick put on his hat.

"Stay, Mr. Mortiboy, this won't do."

"We're partners now, Ghrimes. Call me Dick."

"Well, then, Mr. Dick. I don't know how to thank you for myself. As for Frank, it is an act which I call noble. I say it is noble, Mr. Mortiboy — I mean, Mr. Dick."

"You wouldn't if you knew every thing, perhaps," said Dick. "However, what is the hitch?"

"Why, this: we must arrange terms of partnership, proportions — all sorts of things."

"I will see Battiscombe, then, at once. We will have a deed drawn up on terms which shall be advantageous to yourselves, and consistent with my desire to do a mere act of justice. Ghrimes, my father was the real cause of Melliship's failure and suicide."

"To some extent I am afraid he was," said Ghrimes. "If your father had been a different sort of a man, poor Mr. Melliship would have had no scruples about asking a little accommodation from him, especially as he knew how easily he could give it,

but your father always seemed to me to be trying to get him into his power. Not to break him, and ruin him, but to keep him in his power. Your father always loved to have people under his thumb."

"Just so, and my Uncle Melliship's death was a protest against my father's way of dealing. We are doing simply an act of reparation. Go-to-meeting folks sometimes do acts of reparation, besides repenting of their sins, I hope, Ghrimes? That's their affair, not mine, however. I'm going to write to Frank, and make him this offer. He'll accept it; and as soon as he comes down here we can all three sign Battiscombe's parchment, and enter into our partnership."

He went away. Bethinking him, however, that the letter should be written at once, he turned into his father's house in Derngate to do it.

He was very careful about this letter. He began by reminding Frank of their relationship; of the many kindnesses he had himself received from Frank's father; of the friendly and affectionate terms with which Mr. Melliship had received him on his return; and then he went on to enlarge upon the unhappy connection between his own father and the failure of Melliship, Mortiboy, & Co. After this he proceeded to state his proposition.

"And now, Frank, having said so much, I have something to propose. I was yesterday talking about you to Grace Heathcote, and I have her authority for saying that she entirely approves of the proposition. What she approves of ought to be law to you. It is that you enter my bank as a partner, on equal terms with Ghrimes; that the name of Melliship be added to Mortiboy & Co.; that you come down here at once, and begin as soon as the deeds are drawn out. I hope you will see no obstacle to your accepting this proposition. Remember it comes from your first cousin, the man who owes a hundred debts of gratitude to your father; that Grace wishes it; that it will enable you to marry; in time, to pay off those debts with which your father's estate is encumbered; that it will do what is most desirable for your mother and Kate, bring them back to Market Basings; and bring you back, if this is any thing, to all your old friends. Ghrimes is most eager that you will see your way to accept my proposal. He is as anxious as any one to see you back again, and in your right position."

He folded his letter, put it into an envelope, and took it to Lucy Heathcote, asking her to forward it to Kate Melliship, who in turn would send it to Frank.

Lucy was with his father. She was old

Ready-money's constant nurse and attendant, and was walking by the side of the poor old paralytic, while Hester pushed his Bath chair along the gravel terrace at the back of his house.

The aspect was sunny, and every fine day the old man was twice wheeled out to take the air. His state of late had been a good deal improved, and Lucy was full of hope. At first he had been unable to move at all, and, besides, had been generally almost unconscious. Then as he got a little better, he had recovered the partial use of one arm, and his wits had brightened very much. He was so far recovered now that he knew every thing that was said to him quite well, expressed acquiescence with a slight nod of his old head, and conveyed intelligence of refusal or dislike to any thing by wrinkling his forehead into a frown.

When Dick came near him, he puckered his face in a dozen ugly ways.

Probably, he only half recollected what had taken place on the night he had the stroke; but it was clear to his son there was some memory left of that night's doings. Young Ready-money did not trouble his father with much of his company. Lucy had got a porcelain tablet, and wrote with a blue pencil on it. This she held before the old man, and kept writing a fresh question, till she found out what he wanted. This process was often a very tedious one; but, with practice, Lucy Heathcote became very expert in understanding what was passing in her uncle's mind. His appetite was good; but as his faculty for tasting his food was gone, he had no disposition to quarrel with his cook. They gave him a little weak brandy and water to drink; and he spent his time between his bed, his sofa, and his bath chair, happily enough. When Dick handed Lucy the letter for Frank, the old man frowned hard, as was his wont. The young man instructed his cousin as to the destination of the letter, asked after his father, and then strode away across the lawn, down the garden, and over the river towards his own little villa.

"Why does Uncle Richard always frown so desperately at Cousin Dick, whenever he comes here?" Lucy Heathcote asked herself.

She was frightened at Dick, and never had loved him much. She already had suspected there was something wrong — what, she could not tell.

Nor did she set to work with slate and pencil to worm the secret out. But her uncle's conduct, when his idolized son approached him, left a disagreeable impression upon her mind she tried in vain to shake off.

Dick followed the river, passing the scene of his exploit with Polly, and the old cross where he had made known his love to Grace Heathcote. This was a sacred spot, and he sat musing under the shadow of the decaying stone for a good half hour.

The river wound round the base of the hill on the top of which the cross stood, and presently struck across Hunslope Park.

Following the tow-path, Dick had not walked far before he saw the earl himself coming towards him. He shook hands with him very cordially.

"We are well met, Mr. Mortiboy. How do you do? I was thinking of calling upon you to-morrow at the bank. I want you to" —

"If it is about money matters, my lord, pray see Mr. Ghrimes. I may mention that he is, or will be in a few days, my junior partner in the bank."

"Indeed!" said his lordship, with surprise. "I was not aware that Mr. Ghrimes had any fortune, Mr. Mortiboy. I have known him for many years, of course. Very happy to hear it. Very obliging, gentleman-like man."

"Glad to hear your lordship say so," said Dick. "All our customers like George Ghrimes, I think. But you were right about his having no fortune, my lord. The only capital that Mr. Ghrimes will put into my concern is incorruptible honesty, untiring zeal, and high capacity for business — unless I add to the credit account, my lord, my gratitude for fifteen years' faithful service in the firm of Mortiboy & Co."

It was rather a high-flown speech for Dick to make, and he felt it; but there is something very invigorating in talking to a lord, until you get quite used to them. And young Ready-money had only lately left a Republic behind him.

His lordship's business with Dick was to tell him he wished to overdraw his amount to a greater extent than it usually was.

"I shall have to write a great many checks, Mr. Mortiboy; and my steward will not pay in the bulk of the rents he has to receive for the last two months."

Dick replied, —

"Of course, we shall do every thing we can to fall in with your views."

"Thank you very much, Mr. Mortiboy. Pray is that your son I have seen you riding with? I thought you were unmarried."

"So I am. That is my ward."

"We must marry you, Mr. Mortiboy — marry you, and put you into the house. You ought to sit for Market Basing."

"That's not my line, Lord Hunslope. I shall neither marry nor go into Parliament."

"Property has duties, Mr. Mortiboy. You have, if I am correctly informed, a very — very large stake in this country. In the interests of landed proprietors, we want men like yourself in the Lower House. Dangerous times like these demand the co-operation of all who have any stake in the country."

"No," said Dick. "I am only waiting here for a while; and I shall go away again, with the boy — to the West, probably, somewhere or other. As for the property, in course of time it will go to my cousins, the Heathcotes, just as if I had never come home at all."

Lord Hunslope stared curiously at the strange man who thought so little of a great property.

"You are a young man, Mr. Mortiboy. You will change your mind, and marry."

"I am not one of those who change their minds, Lord Hunslope. I shall never marry. A large part of my property, which my father made over to me, will go, I repeat, to my cousins. When they marry, they will have, as I intend to arrange before I go away, some portion of it as their marriage dowries. My cousins are very good girls, Lord Hunslope: and, so far as I can judge of young ladies, fit to take higher positions than that which farmers' daughters generally aim at. Not that I care much about position. You see, I am more of an American than an Englishman. In the States we don't ask many questions about a man's family."

"They are very — hum — very excellent young ladies. You know, Mr. Mortiboy, that Mr. Heathcote is a man for whom I have the highest respect."

"As your lordship is not a fool," said Dick bluntly, "that goes without saying, as the French put it. You may add, if you like, that the Heathcotes are a very old family — had all this estate long before your ancestors got it."

"That, also, I know. The Heathcotes are a representative race," said Lord Hunslope, a little taken back by Dick's plain speaking. "Call at the Towers sometimes, Mr. Mortiboy. The countess will be very glad to see you. Come now, and take luncheon with us."

Dick made an excuse, and turned his steps homeward. The earl looked at him, striding along, great and strong, with eyes of envy. He was young and rich. The peer was old and poor.

"He's only a great boy, after all," thought the earl. "He knows nothing about our English life, and cares nothing about it."

Then he bethought him about the Heathcote girls, and their prospects, and went home.

"Have you remarked," he asked the countess, "those two Heathcote girls?"

"Grace and Lucy Heathcote? Oh, yes! I know them very well. What about them? Their manners are quiet and simple, much above their station — very much above the manners of that very vulgar person, their mother."

"I think so myself. Those girls, Althea, will have a fortune of half a million sterling. That is, that large property will be divided between them."

The countess looked up in amazement.

"Half a million? You must be joking."

"Not joking at all. I was never more in earnest. Young Mr. Mortiboy, whom you saw at the children's sports the other day, told me himself, this morning, that he should not marry. He intends to go back to America, with a boy he carries about, and settle there. The two girls will have his money."

"My dear, he is not five and thirty. He may live forever. Above all, he is sure to marry."

"He may live a long time, but he will keep his word. I have heard that young Ready-money, as they call him, always keeps his word in the smallest particular — for the matter of that, his father always did the same. He told me this with the most perfect seriousness. Now think."

The countess smiled.

"Mrs. Heathcote is a horribly vulgar woman."

"The father is not vulgar. John Heathcote is rough, but he is a gentleman in his way. There is no man I respect more than John Heathcote. A good old family too. They had Hunslope long before we were heard of."

"Cadwallader founded my family," said her ladyship sweetly, who had only intermarried with the earls of Hunslope. "Certainly, with all that money, the girls would have a right to marry above their station, as things go."

"Ronald is so shy," said Lord Hunslope.

Yet this conversation was the beginning of Grace Heathcote's having a third wooer at her feet.

CHAPTER XLIV.

ONE more incident in the quiet life of Grace Heathcote, — an event which was not calculated to add any thing to the sum

total of her happiness, grateful as conquest is to beauty.

The particularly fine evenings of that early autumn, coupled with the recollection that croquet is a game not to be played with comfort after the middle of October, did not tend to cause any diminution in the frequency of Lord Launton's visits to Parkside.

He always had some good excuse for coming, and he did not want much pressing to take a mallet and join the little party on the lawn when he was there; but out of mere shyness, he seemed on every occasion to pay more court to Lucy than to Grace.

It happened, that, a very few days after Lord Hunslope's conversation with Dick Mortiboy, Mrs. Heathcote had Lawyer Battiscombe, his wife, and daughters, from Market Basing, spending the afternoon with her.

Mrs. Heathcote, who was very fond of showing her town friends the beauties and conveniences of country life, heartily loving to hear them praise every thing that appertained to Parkside, and secretly rejoicing over their envy, had strolled with her friend as far as the little cottage where the poultry-woman lived, and where her turkeys and chickens were kept. The two ladies, with the skirts of their silks well bunched up in front of them, had hardly struggled through the ramshackle wicket into the poultry-yard, when Mrs. Battiscombe exclaimed, —

"Look, dear; there's a young gentleman coming to us. Why, isn't it Lord Launton?" she added, letting down the train of her dress, quite in a flutter.

Her friend was delighted. If there was one thing necessary to complete her triumph over the pretensions of the Battiscombe girls, it was to show off Lord Launton to their mother. She had been secretly hoping, ever since tea, that he would come; but she said, calmly enough, —

"Oh, yes! it's only Lord Launton. I dare say he wants to see me or John about something."

He came up, raised his hat to the ladies most politely, and began to stammer out his business to Mrs. Heathcote.

"I am a sort of deputation, Mrs. Heathcote."

"Yes, your lordship," said the lady, smiling very graciously.

"The boy's cricket ground in the park is spoilt now — we have so many things in one part, and in the other the ground is not level; and I am come to ask Mr. Heathcote to be good enough to let them play in his home field till the end of the season. It won't be long before it is over now."

The young man took a great deal of trouble to promote athletics among the Hunslope boys.

"I dare say he will, if they don't do any mischief," said Mrs. Heathcote; "but boys are so mischievous."

"You see, the field is close to the school; and they must have a cricket-ground close at hand, if we can get them one. May I go and look if the ground will do, if Mr. Heathcote says we may have it? I think the field is very level."

The home close was on the other side of the hedge.

"It is so close to my poultry-yard," said Mrs. Heathcote; "they all run in the field. I'm afraid the boys will pelt the guinea fowl and hens. We have often had one killed; haven't we, Mrs. Thompson?"

With the honest bluntness of speech, and stark insensibility to the claims of the peerage to complaisant treatment, which is characteristic of our peasantry when they happen to be somebody else's tenants, Mrs. Thompson replied, —

"That we have indeed, ma'am. There was the white speckly hen only last week; and a parcel of young tearbacons a-rommackin' all over the field, no poultry won't do no good, to say nothing of getting fat."

"I'll be answerable for the good conduct of the 'tearbacons,'" said Lord Launton.

"It is a good deal nearer my hencoops than I like, your lordship; but I've no doubt Mr. Heathcote will give the boys leave."

She meant to prevent him from doing it, though, all the same.

There was a pause in the conversation, broken at last by Lord Launton, who, feeling it a duty to say something, remarked a little nervously, —

"What very fine turkeys you have, Mrs. Heathcote."

The woman who kept the poultry showed the visitors her collection of birds.

"Take that water away from the coop with the ducks in," said her mistress.

And then, turning to Lord Launton, she said, —

"They are two couples we're fattening; and I don't like to let 'em swill the barley-meal out as fast as they put it in."

The young man smiled.

"But, poor things, are they not thirsty this warm weather?"

"I don't know," replied the business-like lady, "they've got to get fat."

Lord Launton moralized to himself on the miseries of the poultry-yard, until they were joined by Mr. Heathcote, who had come across his fields.

He gave his promise about the cricket-ground, much to his wife's chagrin. They strolled back to the house together, and joined the little party on the croquet lawn.

Sides were chosen afresh. John Heathcote, Grace, and Lord Launton played Lawyer Battiscombe, his two daughters, and Lucy.

Mrs. Battiscombe was charmed; but so was Mrs. Heathcote. The two dowagers sat under a great elm, on the rising ground at the top of the garden, where they had a view of the road and the village.

"Really, he's very affable," remarked Mrs. Battiscombe.

"He often comes over, and plays at croquet. We like him very well."

"I hope he won't run away with one of the girls' hearts, my dear," said the lawyer's lady, as it were calling "check" to Lydia's king. She put her ring-bedizened hand affectionately on Mrs. Heathcote's arm.

"I never think of such things, Mary." They had been schoolfellows at Miss Prim's, and kept up the farce of Christian names, though neither had loved the other for ages. "He often comes to see us, and John likes him; that's all."

"Of course, we could never expect that he would be allowed" — Mrs. Battiscombe began; but her remark was stopped by hearing the sound of wheels. A carriage and pair! Why, it is Lord Hunslope and the countess! "she cried, craning out her neck among the boughs.

Now it was Lydia's turn to call "check."

"Lords are as common as blackberries about Hunslope, my dear. I'm sure we never take any more notice of them than of other folks."

But she stood up, with her best cap just over the laurel hedge; and when the countess bowed, and Lord Hunslope raised his hat, she gave a complacent, vulgar little nod.

Their son saw the carriage, and turned rather red; but when it stopped at John Heathcote's gate, and then came on slowly up the gravel drive, he became quite the color of the poppies.

The earl got out, and shook hands with the Heathcotes, and bowed to the Battiscombes.

Lydia Heathcote took the visit as a matter of course. She left Mrs. Battiscombe under the tree, and strolled up to the carriage. She had never shaken hands with Lady Hunslope before in her life, and only some half-dozen times with his lordship, — generally on such occasions as, riding round with his steward, he had called to solicit her husband's vote and interest for the Blues at the county election.

But Mrs. Heathcote did not see any good in letting the Battiscombes — and through them, all Market Basing — know this; and she shaped her course accordingly.

Lord Launton, recollecting that it was getting rather late, drove away in his father's carriage.

He expected to receive a sorrowing remonstrance from his mother; for the scion of the house founded by Cadwallader had very clearly defined notions of the grades set out in the Table of Precedence, and sat, with his back to the horses, calmly awaiting it.

It did not come. All his mother said on the subject was comprised in a very few words: that Grace and Lucy Heathcote were very amiable girls, and had very good blood in their veins. William de Heathcote, of Hunslope, was mentioned in Froissart.

Now you see the effect of Dick Mortiboy's candid confession to the earl. He had been deeply moved by the intelligence that a man so rich — so extraordinarily rich — was seriously promising, not only to leave his very great fortune to his cousins, but also to endow them with a portion, when they should marry, fitting their future inheritance.

As for Mrs. Battiscombe, she went home with her maternal breast full of envy and uncharitable feeling, and spread the news all over Market Basing that Grace Heathcote had jilted poor Francis Melliship's son, as she always said she would, and was trying to catch Lord Launton, as if — &c.

Mrs. Heathcote, on the other hand, was in an ecstasy of delight. She got down "Burke's Landed Gentry" from the bookcase, and read all about William de Heathcote, of Hunslope. She compared the Heathcote pedigree with the Smiths — only city bankers, and so like her own family, the great Mortiboy stock, after all.

From these authentic records she drew her own conclusions; and every day she talked of Lord Launton, praised his personal appearance — the youth was by no means ill-looking, having a certain air of nobleness which comes of good breeding, and a mind kept steadily at a certain elevation — commended his manners, which had whatever merit belongs to shyness, and spoke in glowing terms of the happiness which would be the portion of that girl who might become his wife.

Now, all this fell upon the ears of Grace like the wind upon a fixed weathercock: it moved her not at all. She did not, to begin with, understand it. In the second place, she was too full of her own cares to think much about them. Least of all did she fancy that the heir of Hunslope Towers was about to propose to her.

"Really," she said, "I think, Lucy dear, that Lord Launton has — now, don't blush, my child, because it's quite possible, and you are very pretty — has fallen — fallen — fallen — shall I go on?"

"Grace, dear," said Lucy, blushing more than ever, "don't — please don't."

"Then I won't, Lucy."

And the very next day Lord Launton proposed to her.

Proposed in the garden, just where Dick had made the same offer of his hand and heart. Stammered and blushed — stammered till he could hardly speak; told her, in an infinite amount of reduplicated words and any number of consonants, how he loved her.

Grace, this time, was neither pained nor touched. She only laughed.

"Poor boy!" she said. "Do you know that I don't love you at all, and never could? And do you know that you are the future Earl of Hunslope, and I only the daughter of a very plain gentleman?"

"I know," said Lord Launton. "B — b — but I have my father's permission, and your father's p — p —"

"Prohibition, I should hope," said Grace. "No, Lord Launton. No — no — NO! There, is that enough?"

The poor young fellow stooped his head to hide his hot face.

"Do I seem unkind?" Grace asked.

"See, Lord Launton, I do not mean to be unkind. I like you very much. I cannot understand how your father could give you permission to speak to me, or my father either. But you may know that I am already engaged — to Frank Melliship, your old schoolfellow."

"I knew — that is, I ought to have known. G — G — G — Grace, is there no hope? — not the least hope?"

"Not the least spark. Not a glimmer, Lord Launton. And, besides, you have never paid me any attentions at all. I thought you liked Lucy better."

"That was b — b — because I loved you."

"I don't profess to understand the workings of a man's love; but I do know this, that when Frank Melliship loved me, he did not make pretence to my sister first. He came straight to me."

"I was wrong. O Miss Heathcote! I'm a p — p — poor creature. I stammer, and am afraid almost to speak. Forgive my shyness."

"Indeed, there is nothing to forgive. But, pray, Lord Launton — no, I won't ask any more questions. Let all be as it was before. Come here as much as you like, and let us be friends. Shall it be so? indeed, I am so grateful for the honor — that

is I think I shall be, when I am an old woman. I shall remember that I had a chance of a coronet. But a woman can only love one man, and my love is promised — promised, Lord Launton."

She sighed wearily. Promised — and for how long?

Poor Lord Launton stood irresolute. His painful shyness interposed between himself and all his impulses. He beat it down, and said, with a mighty effort, —

"Miss Heathcote, forget what I have said. I will endeavor to conquer my love for you. I am not a selfish egotist — that is, I will try not to be. If I can help your happiness, let me try to do so."

"You may help Frank, if you can; but, alas! you cannot. O Lord Launton! why have you brought this unlooked-for misery into the house?"

"What misery, my dear Miss Heathcote — what misery?"

"It is only that my poor dear mother will be dazzled by the chance that I have thrown away; and I shall have to endure her reproaches. Go, Lord Launton. If you must marry one of us, Lucy is a better match for you — not so stubborn, not so rebellious, not so self-willed, and oh! a great deal prettier, more gentle, more Christian. She would make a better wife. Go away, my dear boy. Why, you are only a month older than I am; you are only a boy yet, Lord Launton. And I am as tall as you, see" — she smiled through her tears. "And oh, it is such a pity, because I was so fond of you!"

She took his beardless face in her hands, — she was really as tall as her admirer, and looked taller, with her pile of hair, — and drew it towards her, and kissed him on the forehead.

"There, Ronald, Lord Launton, that is a sister's kiss. It would be hard to alter that. We have known each other as long as — oh! since we were little things, and used to meet you in the Pond Walk with your nurse. Be my friend — a great deal better for you, poor boy, than being my husband. Go, now, and come again just as usual."

It was a most ignominious dismissal. The heir of Hunslope Towers, conscious of having made himself an outrageous idiot, stole silently away. As he went through the house, he met Mrs. Heathcote. Truth to say, the poor lady had been to the highest rooms in the house, the servants' rooms, whose windows commanded a view of the heads of the performers in this garden act.

"Come in, Lord Launton, and talk to me," she said graciously.

"No, Mrs. Heathcote," he stammered.

"No, it's no use. She won't listen to me."

"Not listen to you? Nonsense! Not listen to you? Oh, give her time, Lord Launton! She's afraid of you."

"No — no — no. It is I who was af — afraid of her," he groaned. "It is no use, Mrs. Heathcote — I am refused."

Mrs. Heathcote went back to her parlor, and sat in a tumult of conflicting passions. Presently her husband came home. She said nothing. Lucy returned from choir practice. Grace came down from her own room, her eyes red with crying. She sat silent, with a book before her. Mr. Heathcote rang the bell for supper at the usual time. They sat down, Mrs. Heathcote sighing heavily.

"What's the matter, old lady?" asked John, with a misgiving that a family row was impending.

For all reply, she burst into tears, and sighed hysterically. The girls ran to her assistance.

"Go away," she said to Grace. "Go away, ungrateful girl! After all I've done for you."

"Eh? eh? eh?" asked John, looking from one to the other. "What is it, Grace?"

"Wicked girl," cried her mother. "O John, John! a coronet thrown away! Half a million of money thrown away! Grace, I was in the garden and heard you refuse your cousin a week ago; and now you have refused Lord Launton. John Heathcote, your daughter Grace refuses to marry either Dick Mortiboy or the future heir of Hunslope, because she loves a pauper! a pauper and a painter!"

Grace turned to her father.

"Papa, Dick asked me to marry him, and Lord Launton asked me to marry him. I was obliged to say 'No,' because I am engaged to Frank."

Mr. Heathcote sat down to the table, and cut himself deliberately a great slice of cold boiled beef, with a meditative air. Then he took some pickles; and then, having meanwhile turned the matter over in his mind, he said, —

"Girls, sit down. Lydia, you're a fool. Grace shall marry anybody she likes. Come here, my dear, and kiss your father."

When John Heathcote put his foot down, which was very seldom, there was a general feeling in everybody's mind that the thing was definitely settled. Mrs. Heathcote said no more; but, heaving a profound sigh, she rang the bell for a candle, and retired to bed, taking the Bible with her, so that she might, at least, have the consolations of religion.

CHAPTER XLV.

No intelligence of Frank's whereabouts.

"We only know that he receives our letters," wrote Kate, "because he answers them. They go to the post-office, Great Bedford Street. His own have for the last two or three weeks been more despondent, that is, less cheerful than ever before. They have not the true ring about them that they had. I think, though I dare not say so to mamma, that his good spirits are forced. I have written and told him about Dick's splendid offer. It is generous in the highest degree. It is more than generous. Tell him I think it is noble. I shall not write to him myself, till I have Frank's answer. Yes, Grace, my picture was accepted, hung, and sold. I was at once glad to get the money, and sorry to let the picture go. I am doing another now, just a woodland scene — painted here in the mountains — with a single figure in it; a quiet picture, which I hope to succeed with. Only when I have finished a picture I like, it goes to my heart to let it be sold. Frank keeps sending us money. It is such a pity, because we really do not want any. We have plenty; and we are happy again. Only nine months ago, Gracie, and what a difference! what a difference!"

Thus far Kate Melliship. Grace showed the letter to Dick.

"There are two or three ways," he said, "of getting hold of Frank. A man can't hide himself altogether, unless he cuts off communication by letter. Evidently he doesn't want at present to be hunted up. All the same, I will go up to London and find him for you, Gracie."

"But how, Dick? How can you find him?"

"Well, I shall go to the post-office where his letters are sent. I shall ask them who takes his letters, and how often they are sent for. If they won't tell me, I shall bribe them till they do. They are sure to do it for half a sovereign. After that, we have only to go on the day when he appears, and lie in wait to catch him beautifully. Once my hand is on his shoulder, Grace, you may be quite sure that I don't let him go again till I bring him back to you."

"When will you go, Dick?" she asked eagerly. "To-morrow? Go to-morrow, and make haste. I've got some foolish sort of nervous feeling, as if something was going to happen. I don't know what, or how. I've had it for a week. I suppose I'm not very well."

"Thunder in the air," said Dick. "If

any thing happens, it will be something good for you. So be ready to jump for joy."

That evening he told his little boy of his intention to go to London; and still suspicious that Polly, of whom he knew nothing beyond the fact that she drew her pound a week, might return in his absence and carry off the boy, he told him to be ready in the morning to go to town with him.

The fast train from Market Basing leaves at nine o'clock, and is at Euston at half-past ten. They started to walk to the station; for Dick hated luggage and always kept changes of raiment and fine linen at his chambers in Jermyn Street. Crossing the river, Dick bethought him that he had not seen his father for some days. So he passed through the garden into the house.

Mr. Mortiboy was in his bed. Hester was feeding him with a spoon; his breakfast consisting of bread and milk. He frowned at his son as usual, and then quietly took his milk, a spoonful at a time, until the basin was emptied. Dick sat by the side of his bed, and watched him eat. His appetite was very good; altogether there was a change in him. The fixed smile had almost left his mouth, and the distortion of his face was much less noticeable. Then his eye was brighter, his memory better, the cloud seems to be gradually lifting from his mind. As his son sat by his bedside, watching Hester feed the old man, and thinking of all that had happened, suddenly there flushed upon his memory an old, old day, so long ago that it had never once come back to him: a day more than a quarter of a century old: an autumn day like the present, when the golden tints were on the leaves; a morning when, a child, he walked hand-in-hand with his father, and asked him questions. He remembered how his father, lifting him in his arms, stroked his cheeks and kissed him; how he flung his own arms round his neck and kissed his father again. A simple childish caress: it might have occurred a thousand times to most children; to Dick it seemed only to have occurred once, because Mr. Mortiboy was an undemonstrative man, and with him such events were rare. As he remembered this, another thought came upon him; it was, that never once since that day, save when his own crime caused relapse, had his father's love ceased to burn in a steady flame. He knew it now: he recognized it even in the starved and pinched life he had been made to lead: even in the tyranny of his youth; even in the hard work and long hours to which his father subjected him—all this was to make him grow up like himself—and in the ready confidence and trust with which he

received the prodigal returning home. He knew it all, in a single moment; and a sharp pain shot through him as he looked upon the wreck he had himself caused.

Dick was not one, however, to sit down and weep, throwing ashes upon his head and clothing himself with sackcloth. The thought came upon him, as one which might often come again, a grave and saddening thought; his thoughts turned upon the boy whom he had adopted. Suppose little Bill should do something, should turn out somehow like himself. Then he cleared his throat, which was getting husky, and bent slightly over his father—Old Hester had left them alone together.

"Father," he said, "let us be friends again—I am sorry."

The old man moved his slow eyes upwards with a puzzled expression.

Dick looked at him, waiting, but no response came.

He joined the boy, and they set off together to walk to the station.

When Hester came back, she found Mr. Mortiboy looking troubled, and a tear or two had rolled down his withered cheeks.

"Bill," said Dick, in the train—he was quite accustomed to converse on all topics with the boy, who understood or not, as the case might be—"Bill, I wonder if we are going to have a collision, and bust up."

"Why, Uncle Dick?"

"Because the Mexicans say that when a man is going to die he begins to think about the days when he was a child. That's what I've been doing this morning. The only way you can be killed in this peaceful old country is by a railway accident."

"I saw a boy once run over by a 'bus," said Bill thoughtfully.

"Yes, there are other ways, I suppose; but a smash on a railway is the most likely thing. Perhaps, after all, the Mexicans are not always right."

There was no railway accident, at any rate.

At his chambers he found a letter, dated a fortnight and more back, from Lafleur.

"My dear Dick," it ran, "I am in want of money. Please send me a couple of hundred at once."

"In any case," said Dick, "it is too late now. Want of money? What has been done with the five thousand? The System has come to grief, I suppose, after all."

It was not pleasant to think about. The man had been started actually with the money he asked. The partnership was dissolved; the pair had separated, each agreed to go his own way, and yet, only two months after, came this letter. Dick crushed it in his fingers, looking stern and determined.

"It shall not be," he said, thinking aloud. "Polly is gone, and Lafleur shall go. I will have no witnesses left to remind me of the old days. I will live my own life now, with the boy to bring up. Lafleur shall not be with us to bring back what I would forget. No, M. Alcide Lafleur, it will not do. Your own secrets are as bad as mine, and worse. You dare not speak, at any rate. I will give you one more start, on condition that you go away to California, or somewhere over the water, and never come back again. You shall not stand in my way. I defy any man to stand in my way. My path is clear and certain. I will start Frank and Ghymes. Then I will go away and stay away for ten years with the boy. And then I will come back, and put him out in life, and settle down. I shall be turned forty then. I shall never marry. I have said so. There will be other children then, Grace's children, to amuse me. I shall spend the rest of my life, thirty years and more, among the children."

He took no notice of the letter, and went on to the post-office, to find out Frank, if possible. It was a poor little post-office, kept by a bookseller in a small way, perhaps a man who should be described as one who sold small books. Specimens of his ware were in the window, cheap religious books mostly, and the doorway was filled with the *affiche* boards of daily papers.

Dick found a woman behind the counter, and stated his business.

"I—I—don't think it's hardly regular," she said. "People come and get their letters here, but I don't know that I ought to tell you any thing about them."

"There's five shillings; now you will tell me."

It was blunt, but effective. The woman took the shillings, put them in her pocket, and went on at once.

"I don't know any thing about the gentleman who has the letters addressed to him as Mr. Melliship. Sometimes he comes, a tall, fair-haired young man, quite the gentleman; sometimes it's a young person."

"A girl, you mean? A young lady?"

She smiled superior, and tossed her head.

"Not a lady, I should say, certainly. At least, I wouldn't compare her with myself. A young woman, sir."

"Pretty, as well as young?"

She bridled up. "That's a matter of opinion. I don't hold with a pink and rose face, and a bit of false hair."

"Is that all you can tell me?"

"That's all, sir. I'm sorry to say."

"Then you've taken five shillings out of me on false pretences," said Dick, pretending to be in a rage. "I've a great mind to

report you to head-quarters." The woman turned all colors. "Well, I won't this time, if you'll tell Mr. Melliship, or the young person, the next time the letters are asked for, that his cousin has been to see him, and wants him particularly. On what day does the young person come?"

"On Monday morning, always, sir, about eleven o'clock, unless he comes himself. Quite the gentleman, he is."

He was in the neighborhood of Gray's Inn Road, and thought of Mrs. Kneebone's; he took his way down that thoroughfare with a view of finding out if Polly had been there, and what she had done.

Sitting at the entrance of the court was the boy Thoozy, looking wistfully down in the direction of Holborn. It was down the street that little Bill had gone with the swell; and he naturally expected that it was by that way he would return. Dick touched him on the shoulder.

He jumped up on his crutches, and grinned a perfect pean of joy.

"Well, Thoozy," said Dick, "and how's things?"

"How's little Bill?" returned Thoozy.

"Well and strong. He sent you a message a little while ago by a tramp. Didn't you get it?"

"Never," said Thoozy. "Never. What was it?"

"Only to send his love, and you were not to forget him."

"I never forgets him," said the poor boy. "I got no one to talk to now he's gone; and the old woman's took on dreadful with drink ever since the day Polly Tresler came."

"Ah! what was that? Tell me all about it, boy. Come into the court, and sit on your own step."

Mrs. Kneebone saw them coming up the road, and trembled. Was further information wanted, and should she expose herself to another assault, of an aggravated nature? She decided at once on her line of action; and, putting on her shawl, she took a jug, and a big key, so as to show that she meant business, and sallied down the steps.

"Me-thew-salem," she said, with great sweetness, "I'm obliged for to go out a little bit. Take care of them blessed children while I'm away. Good-morning, sir. And it's hoping you found all that I told you c'rect."

Dick nodded his head, and she passed on, seeing no prospect of further coin. "Now, Thoozy," said Dick, "tell me all about it."

If Methusalem had been born in a somewhat higher sphere of life; if he had not been lame; if his flesh, which was weak, had been equal to his spirit, which was

strong; if he had been educated for the stage—he might have made a low comedian of a very unusual kind. His talent was prodigious, but his training was defective.

With an instinctive feeling that a vivid picture of Mrs. Kneebone's discomfiture and Polly's subsequent disaster would be appreciated, Thoozy enacted the whole scene with a dramatic *verve* which set the tragedy vividly before his listener. The boy forgot his lameness and infirmity, mimicked their voices, alternately doing Mrs. Kneebone with her conciliatory hypocrisy, and Polly with her sulky disbelief. When he put in the finishing touch of Mrs. Kneebone's really ill-natured remark about himself, Dick roared with laughter.

"Look here, boy," he said, "you are not very anxious, I suppose, to stay here all your life?"

"I'm an old man," said Thoozy, with a comical leer. "I'm getting very old, and past work. I used to think I'd stay on here all my days; but now little Bill is gone, and I get nobody to talk to, I think a change might do me good. My doctor did recommend," he added, waving his hand grandly, "that I should take six months' holiday, and go to one of our country-seats. With port wine. Says I must drink port wine, three glasses a day. As the resident physician, I couldn't spare the time; but if you press me very hard, I might get away for a bit. I say, sir," he went on, in a changed voice, "let me see little Bill again. I won't do him no harm. I never did, that I knows on. Let me have a talk with him once more, only once."

Dick hesitated. Why should he not take the boy away? With all his quaint affectations, his oddities, and infirmities, he could do no harm to his adopted son. Why not take him too? He took out a card case, and printed his address on a card in pencil.

"I live here. You can read that? Good. Jermyn Street, off Regent Street. Now be careful, and listen. Little Bill is with me there. You make your way at once to St. James's Park. Wait about the door of the Duke of York's Column. I will send Bill to you, or bring him if he doesn't know the way."

"Bill not know the way! He knows his way, like a ferret, all over London, even where he hasn't been. Bill wasn't along with me for nothing."

"Good. You two boys may spend the whole day together. Bring him back to Jermyn Street at nine, as the clock strikes, mind."

"I will. Sharp at nine."

Dick considered a moment.

"Bill's got good clothes now, too," he said.

"Would you like some decent things to put on?"

Thoozy looked at his old coat and his torn trousers, and sighed.

"Come, then. I know a man close by."

He took him to the same dealer who had refitted little Bill, and provided him with a suit of clothes, including stockings—quite unknown to Thoozy, except by hearsay, up to that time—better than he had ever dreamed of.

"Now you've plenty of time, go into Endell Street, and have a bath; brush your hair, and make yourself quite respectable."

He gave him a few shillings to complete his arrangements, and walked away.

Thoozy went back to the court, amid the jeers of the populace—who recognized him, in spite of his grandeur—just to see that the babies were not coming to any harm, rescuing an infant from imminent suffocation, by reason of a corner of the sheet, which it mistook, through want of experience, for the mouth of a feeding-bottle. Thoozy shook them all up, and went his way.

It was one o'clock when Dick got back to Jermyn Street.

"There's a friend of yours wants to see you very much," he said to his ward.

"Thoozy! Thoozy!" cried the boy, with delight.

"That is the party. Are you hungry, Bill?"

"Very little, Uncle Dick?"

"Got any money?"

Little Bill produced two and fourpence from his pocket.

"Go on, then. You can have your dinner with Methusalem, where you like."

"You know your way to the Duke of York's Column. Wait there till you see him."

Dick Mortiboy lunched in his own room, and then smoked the cigar of content and happiness. He embodied his discoveries at the Post Office in Great Bedford Street, in a short note to Grace Heathcote, and despatched it to the pillar box by the woman who was in charge. This was the purport of it: "Frank calls for his letters, or has them called for by a young woman, every Monday morning. We must wait till then. Next Monday I will be there."

It was about three o'clock that a man, all in rage and tatters, rang at the door bell. The old woman in charge, all the other lodgers were out of town, opened it, and looked at him with suspicion.

"I want Mr. Mortiboy."

"Give me your name, and I'll see," she said.

"He knows me. Let me pass."

The man pushed by her, and mounted

the stairs. Dick's sitting-room was at the back, second floor, a small room, but big enough for his purposes. He had, besides, a bedroom for himself, with a dressing-room, in which was a bed for the boy.

He was sitting over his third cigar. He never read books, having lost the habit of reading long since. Sometimes he looked at the newspaper, but not often. He was, therefore, like Capt. Bowker in one respect, that all his ideas were his own. To-day he was more happy and contented than he had ever been before since his return. All was going well with him. Grace would not have him. Very good.

"If she be not fair to me,
What care I how fair she be?"

a quotation he certainly would have made, if he had known it. Unromantic as it may seem, Dick cured himself of his passion by the simple expedient of giving the girl up. He loved her no longer. Men only really love a girl, with that blind, passionate devotion which burns her image upon their hearts in indelible characters, like a tattoo on the arm, between the ages of twenty and thirty. After that, experience. Men past the sixth lustrum know womankind better. They know the other sex because they know their own. They know that no women are perfect, and they suspect their own passion. Now, suspicion to passion is like the sunshine to a coal fire: puts it out. Dick gave up his love with a mighty effort, because it was very strong; but, having given it up, he gave it up altogether. There was no half measures with Dick. Thorough at all times. If Grace had accepted him, no husband could have been more true and more faithful than he, more attentive, more thoughtful. Just as he had been a thorough rogue, just as he was going to be a thorough "respectable," just so he would have been a thorough lover. But it could not be; and therefore, as a philosopher, he acknowledged that it was better not to think of it. Now his plans were changed. To go away altogether, to take the boy with him he was now considering—even the thought of taking Thoozy, too, had crossed his mind; to come back after many years; this was his new programme. As he lay back in his easy chair, his handsome face breathed a sweet spirit of hope and cheerfulness, and with every fresh cloud of tobacco came another castle of contentment and repose.

His door opened. He looked round to see who it was, but started to his feet at sight of the miserable object before him. Alcide Lafleur stood in the doorway. Ragged, starving, pinched, and footsore,

his old partner stood there in front of him, staring at him with haggard eyes.

"Good God! man," he said, "what is this?"

"Did you not get my letter, Dick?"

"To-day, this morning. What is this?"

"First give me money to get food and clothes. I am almost starving."

Dick thrust all the money in his pockets into Lafleur's hands. "Go quickly. Get things, and then come back. Take my latch-key, and return as soon as you can."

Lafleur took the money and the key, and crept away.

Dick lit another cigar. But the current of his thoughts was rudely disturbed. The clouds of tobacco were angry and threatening now, and filled with colored pictures. He filled and drank three or four glasses of wine in succession. Then he sat down doggedly to wait, with his hands in his pockets. Presently the old woman came up.

"If you don't want me, sir," she said, "I've particular business, and should like to go out this afternoon."

She resented the appearance of lodgers in September, when everybody, including the landlady, was away; and she was not inclined to put herself about, to please anybody.

"Oh, yes!" said Dick; "you can go. I'm not likely to want any thing. Be back by nine; the boys are coming in then, and will want some supper."

It was a little before six when the front door slammed and a footfall sounded on the stairs.

A moment afterwards, M. Alcide Lafleur, washed, shaven, trimmed, and dressed, darkened the threshold of his old partner's room. He was rehabilitated and at least externally restored to the semblance of his former state.

"*Sacré!*" he exclaimed, pinching up the sleeve of his new coat and turning it round. "What a climate!"

There were great rain spots on it. He wiped his new hat with his new cambric handkerchief.

"Never mind the rain," said Dick Mortiboy. "Now tell me all about it. How came you to get into such a mess?"

"Light your gas, first, my friend," said Lafleur; "it is cursedly dark in this little hole"—

It was dark; the clouds were black; a thunderstorm had burst over London.

Dick put a match to his gas.

"Young Ready-money is the sobriquet the respectable citizens of your native village have conferred on their philanthropic millionaire," he continued, with that thin,

sneering smile of his on his face. "I think if Alcide Lafleur had either the title or the money he would somewhere in London have found an apartment more distinguished than this is."

He looked round Dick's simple sitting-room, and shrugged his shoulders. Gentlemen of his temperament soon recover themselves. Lafleur had already recovered. He was the same man that had got Dick Mortiboy out of the prison in Palmiste; that had traded with him, run the blockade with him, gambled, swindled, and lied with him. Lafleur was unchanged; but his partner was no longer Roaring Dick, and the company of his old companion was distasteful to him; his voice grated on his ear.

"The rooms do for me, Lafleur: nobody knows me, and if they did it would not matter."

"Always so careless, so rough. My dear Richard, if I had your money," he heaved a sigh: he thought of what he had given up in giving back Dick's word to him. "Ah! how unfortunate I have been — how lucky, you! and you are content with a hammock, a beefsteak, and a pot of beer!"

"Have you actually lost all?" asked Dick abruptly.

"My cursed luck," replied Lafleur, looking at the rain beating down the window. "How it pelts! *Ma foi!*"

"Never mind the rain; tell me all about it," said Dick a second time; and Lafleur told his story. It took him half an hour to tell it, but briefly it was the story of every man who ever went to Hombourg to break the bank — except that lucky thousandth one who breaks it. At first, luck was with Lafleur; night after night he went home with every pocket stuffed with gold pieces.

"Dick, if you had been with me I should have landed the grand *coup* — twice — instead of begging myself. You have pluck, dash, *élan*. You would have carried out the System, and piled the money on. I was a coward; I hesitated. It came to putting down two thousand in one stake — the bank had been winning enormously, they would have covered any stake — the cards seemed bedevilled. And I dared not do it. Like a mad fool I left the table. Dick, the next time did it. If I had only had pluck, I should have landed myself with a profit of five thousand pounds on the run." He laughed, "As I always told you, the more the run was against you, the more you must win — at the end. My System is perfect. I was the fool."

"Well," said Dick Mortiboy, "you had lost all?"

"Stay. Half — all my winning and half the money I took with me. Cool as I

am, old hand as I am, my dear Richard, my nerve was gone — for the time. Not at the run against me; at my contemptible folly. I ran over to Wiesbaden and played a week at roulette. I won a five hundred there, and then came back to Hombourg. The very same cursed luck attended me again. I had not pluck to put all my money down at one stake. I hesitated and was lost again. My head was gone. I deserted my System, and played with the reckless folly of a madman!" —

"And you were cleaned out?"

"Lost every farthing. But, Dick, you would have saved me. The System is perfect. Carry it out, and I defy you to lose: my want of pluck beat me."

"A cool player, Lafleur, but you always wanted courage."

"When all was gone, I thought of you. I knew you would never turn your back on an old friend. I thought I would come back here to you for more money." Dick's face, as he heard this confession, grew hard. "I sold my clothes, and my rings, and watch; but I lost money on the way. I had only enough left to bring me to New-haven. Dick, I have walked from New-haven to London on tenpence, one franc, upon my honor. Of all my possessions, I have got nothing left but the six-shooter you gave me ten years ago."

Dick got up, and began to pace the room.

"Lafleur, let me say what I think, and then you shall speak. Our partnership is dissolved. You have given me back my word. You know that I never say things unless I mean them. When I sought that dissolution, I meant a complete severance of our connection. I meant that you should have no claim upon me not the least — for the future. I belong to a different world henceforth. Go your way, and let me go mine. That is what I mean still. I am not surprised that the System has broken down; they always do. No man ever yet could invent, or will invent, a scheme to meet the chances of luck. When it isn't luck, it is skill. Now you know exactly what I mean, state exactly what you want me to do."

Lafleur turned white. Tell an inventor that his model is worthless, the model over which he has grown gray; tell a poet that his poem is balderdash, the poem over which he has spent his life; tell a mathematician that his integrals are as useless as the mediæval scholasticism, those integrals on which he has sacrificed his youth, — do all these things with impunity, you will only wound. But do not tell a gambler that his scheme is a mistake and a delusion; you will madden him.

He clutched the arm of his chair, but said nothing.

Dick went on.

"You, know, Lafleur, in spite of our dissolution, that I cannot let an old friend come to grief without my trying to help him. Now I will do this for you: I will give you five hundred now, on condition that you go to America; and I will send you a thousand when I know you have arrived. Think it over."

"Go partners again with me, Dick, only in the System, you know. Come over to Hombourg, and play it yourself, with your own splendid luck. Dick, we must win, I am certain we must win. Bring ten thousand with you. I will be a half-partner, a quarter-partner, any thing. Only let us try it once more."

"No."

Lafleur made no further effort. He knew his man.

"I accept," he said after a few minutes.

Dick took his check-book, and drew a check on his London agents for five hundred pounds.

"What is the day of the month? the twenty-third? I have filled it in with the twenty-second. Never mind, it will be all the same. Keep the condition, Lafleur, or I don't keep mine."

"Some men would threaten you, Dick," said Lafleur, pocketing the check. "I do not. I think you are treating me hardly, but I do not threaten."

"I should like to see the man who would threaten me," said Dick calmly.

Lafleur, whose whole bearing was changed, who had lost his ease and assurance, made no answer to this remark.

"Give me some brandy," he said after a pause. "I am a good deal shaken; I don't quite know what I am saying."

He drank a glass neat, and then had a tumbler of brandy and water mixed half-and-half fashion.

"*Voilà!* I feel better," he said, putting on a little of his old style.

He walked to the windows, and looked out.

"How cursedly it pours down. What are we to do?"

"You can stay and smoke a cigar."

They smoked for some minutes in unbroken silence. The only sound in the room was the pelting of the rain against the window panes.

"Dick, may I propose half an hour at euchre?" he said this doubtfully, half afraid that Dick would refuse. "It is a long time since we played — we may never play again together: let us have a last game."

"I don't mind playing a game or two,

Lafleur," he said. He took out his watch. "It is half-past seven now. I sha'n't play after nine; I shall leave off as the clock strikes. I've got an engagement then."

The first half-hour was over. The clock struck eight and the rain had ceased. The luck was all on Dick's side. He had won thirty pounds of Lafleur. It was scored down on a piece of paper.

"Shall we leave off? You're not in luck, and I don't want to win."

Lafleur begged him to go on. "Lend me ten again." Dick passed the money over the table, and made the score on the paper forty. At half-past eight the debt was a hundred.

"I won't take the money of you," said Dick.

"You shall take it," said Lafleur, tossing off another glass of brandy, "if you leave off a winner. Come on, deal the cards, we have only half an hour."

When half of that half-hour was gone, Dick Mortiboy sprang from his chair, leaned across the table, and brought his hand heavily upon the sleeve of his adversary's coat. In it was a knave, the best card at euchre, which Dick dragged forth.

"Swindler," he cried, "you would even cheat me." He pushed back his chair, turned over the table, and flung the cards in Lafleur's face. Give me back my check," he said sternly, "I have done with you."

Without saying a word, the Frenchman flew at him like a tiger cat. Dick stepped lightly aside, and received him with his left. He fell heavily. He rose again, however, in a moment, and went at him again. A second time he fell. This time he lay on the carpet with a livid face, and for a moment appeared not to move. But his white hand stole stealthily to his coat pocket. He half turned as if to rise, Dick watching him with flashing eyes, and then — then — the sharp crack of a pistol, a column of smoke, a heavy fall, and Dick Mortiboy lying flat on his face. Lafleur started to his feet. He had shot his adversary as he lay, without taking the pistol from his pocket. He leaned over Dick for a moment; he did not move; he turned him on his back; his eyes were closed; he breathed heavily. He unbuttoned the waistcoat: the bullet had entered his chest; he saw stains of blood upon his shirt. Then he went outside to the landing, and listened. Not a sound. He went to Dick's open desk. In it were about twelve sovereigns and some notes. He took ten pounds in gold, leaving the notes: put two of them in Dick's pocket. The keys were in the desk. He locked it, and placed them on the man-

piece. He did this to prevent suspicion of robbery. Next he picked up the table, and hid the cards away, and put the furniture straight. Then he drank another glass of brandy.

One thing he had forgotten — the pistol. He laid it in the hand of the fallen man. As he placed it in Dick's hand, the fingers clutched over it.

And then he took his hat, and glided out of the room.

He came back a moment after, and bent over Dick's face.

Dick neither moved nor spoke.

Enough. Lafleur stole gently away, down the stairs, out of the house, stepping softly through the door. He closed it after him, but the latch did not hold. The clock of St. James's Church began to strike the hour of nine as he reached Piccadilly.

There was not a soul in the house. Jermyn Street, in September, is a howling wilderness. No one, save people at the back, heard the pistol shot; no one saw Lafleur enter or go away; and Dick Mortiboy lay supine, the wet beads of death clustering on his forehead, his life blood welling away from his wound.

CHAPTER XLVI

WHAT did he think of, as he lay there? of his wild life, his lawlessness, his crimes? of the singular chance which had landed him on the shores of respectability and fortune? of his aims and hopes for the future? A man's thoughts when Death stares him in the face are comprehensive. He thinks of all. In a dream, even of half a minute's duration, you may live through a life-time. The Eastern monarch dipped his head into a tub of water, and straightway left his sultanship and became a wanderer for twenty years. At the end of that time he found himself lifting his head out of the water again. This adventure had taken him one minute to accomplish. A man told me that he slipped once in the Alps, and glided for two or three hundred feet, expecting instant death. He was pulled up, I forget how, and saved from death; but, in that brief space, he lived all his life over again. The dying thief upon the cross, — model and ensample of all who repent at the last moment, — at the close of his last hour, when suffering gave way to torpor, and physical pain, one would fain hope, became only a deadened misery, may so have lived in a moment through all his life, and seen clearly what might have been.

Who can tell what thoughts crowded

into the brain of poor Dick Mortiboy, lying there alone and untended, stricken to death? I, for one, cannot. I only know that he was softened and changed of late weeks; that many things had quite suddenly become clear to him; that the old carelessness was changing into gravity; that he was beginning to recognize the evil of his ways; that life had changed its aspect. Wealth had done this for him; wealth that works in many ways, turning the unselfish man into the voluptuary; or the selfish man into one who lives and cares wholly for others. Wealth brings with it its curse or its blessing, just as its recipient is disposed. It is a means to make a Tiberius, or it may make its — Here the law of libel interferes, or I might name one who has great wealth, a giant's strength, and owns it but as a trust for the improvement, as best he can, of his fellows, a single-hearted, honest man, a rich man, for whom the needle's eye is as easy to pass, as for the poorest pauper who breathes with resignation and dies with joy. So it would have been for my Dick Mortiboy. But at the moment when the tide was turned came the stroke of fate, and he who might have done so much, was forbidden to do any thing. Ah! the pity of it — the pity of it!

At nine o'clock — before the old woman returned — came back the boys from their day's holiday. Laughing, radiant, happy, little Bill, followed by his limping companion, strangely diffident now, with his changed and glorified "young 'un," sprang up the steps of the house in Jermyn Street. They found the door open.

"Come in, Thoozy; come up with me. Uncle Dick said you was to come, you know."

Thoozy followed up the stairs, while Bill, running before with the impetuosity of a Peter, reached the door of Dick's chamber, and opened it.

The lamp was out. They stood in darkness. Only on the floor before them a black form.

Bill stopped and looked. A blank dread filled his soul. He trembled; he dared not speak. Behind him he heard Thoozy's crutch as he limped up the stairs. He waited.

"What's that, Thoozy?" he whispered, pointing to the floor.

Thoozy did not answer. The light on the staircase was in his eyes, and he could see nothing. The two boys, clinging to each other, stood shivering with fear, as in the doorway Thoozy made out, in the twilight, the figure of a man upon the floor.

"Go and get a light," he whispered. "Run, quick. Do you know where to find one?"

"They've always one on the stairs," replied the other. "Don't move, Thoozy; don't move?"

He disappeared. As soon as he was gone, Thoozy entered the room, and kneeling down, felt the face of the man who lay so still. It was that of Uncle Dick. He knew it by the long silken beard. A whisper reached his ears.

"Go—fetch a doctor, quick. Get a light—water, for God's sake!"

Bill returned at the moment. Thoozy snatched the candle from him, and got a *carafe* from the bedroom, from which he poured a few drops into the dying man's mouth. He sprinkled his face. And then little Bill, who had watched him with pale face and trembling lips, fell headlong on the ground, weeping and sobbing, kissing the cheeks and lips of his patron, and crying in his agony, "O Uncle Dick—Uncle Dick!"

"Give him more water," said Thoozy; "I am going out for a doctor. Don't let him move till I come back."

Thoozy limped away, forgetting his crutch, and poor little Bill heard him descend step by step.

He was left alone with Dick. Terrors of every kind assailed his heart. He could not speak. All he could do was to lie along the floor, his cheek against Dick's to feel him breathing, to know that he was living. . . . Minutes that seemed hours passed slowly away. At last he heard footsteps again. Thoozy was returning, bringing some one with him. It was the doctor. Thoozy's good sense led him into Waterloo Place, where he knew there was a policeman; of him he got the address of the nearest surgeon. The policeman went with him, suspecting something wrong. The doctor was at home, and came at once.

He took the candle, and began to examine his patient. A weak whisper greeted him.

"I have had an accident," Dick murmured feebly. "Half an hour ago—an old pistol—shot myself in the side—no one in the house to help me—left side—don't move me—I am bleeding to death."

"More light," said the doctor. "Boy, light that lamp."

It was a moderator, the mechanism of which was unknown to Thoozy.

The policeman lit it.

Then the doctor unbuttoned the waistcoat, and looked for the wound. On the floor lay the pistol: he trod upon it. The policeman took it, and, after carefully looking at it, placed it in his pocket.

"One chamber fired," he murmured. "Who is he?" he asked Thoozy.

"I don't know. He knows. Bill knows.

He was a goin' to do something for me; he gave me these clothes to-day, and told me to come at nine," sobbed Thoozy.

"Who is it?" The policeman called to little Bill.

"Mr. Mortiboy," said Bill, as if all the world knew him.

"Does he live here always?"

"No: he lives at Market Basing," said Bill, trembling, in spite of the last few weeks' experience, at sight of a policeman. "He's my Uncle Dick."

"He isn't really his uncle," whispered Thoozy. "He took care o' little Bill. He's no relation at all; told me so hisself."

Meantime the doctor was at work. His face grew very grave. Dick opened his eyes with an effort, and looked at him.

"How long?" he asked.

"It is a very serious accident," began the doctor.

"How long?" repeated Dick, in a hoarse whisper.

"Perhaps half an hour."

"Take paper, and let me make a statement to save trouble."

"Speak very low," whispered the doctor, "I can hear. Do not exert yourself more than you can possibly help."

Dick began in a faint voice,—

"I—Richard—Melliship—Mortiboy—declare that I—have—accidentally shot myself, while preparing to clean my pistol."

You see, he was true to his old partner to the very last. Went out of the world with a lie on his lips, to save him.

The doctor wrote.

"Place the pen in my hand and guide me. I want to sign it, in the presence of yourself and the policeman," said the dying man.

It was done. With faltering fingers Dick traced his name for the last time.

"Have you any testamentary depositions to make or alter?"

"Give me—water,—brandy,—something."

They held up his head—the forehead dank and cold, the cheeks pale, the eyes only opening from time to time with an effort—and the doctor gave him a spoonful of brandy. This revived him a little.

"Write," he said.

"Dearest Cousin Gracie, I am dying. You can find Frank easily. All my money will be yours and Lucy's. Let Frank and Ghrimes be partners. God bless you, my dear. If I had lived I would have"—

Here he stopped. Presently he went on again—

"Remember that I love you for all you have done for me, but that I give you up freely and entirely. Let the money go back to help the poor as much as may be."

He stopped again. Another spoonful of brandy.

"Tell my father" — Here he paused; a strange look of bewilderment crossed his face. "Ah!" he sighed, "it is no use now to tell him any thing. I shall tell him myself."

The doctor thought he was wandering.

"Where is little Bill?" he whispered.

The doctor put the child's face to his.

"O Uncle Dick! Don't die! Don't die, Uncle Dick!"

Dick kissed the tear-wet cheek that lay upon his cheek, and his head fell back.

"Poor little chap," he murmured.

They were his last words. A moment after, without a sigh or a groan, he turned his head to one side — they had brought a pillow from the bedroom — and opened his eyes no more. Dick was dead. Ah! the pity of it — the pity of it!

"Coroner's inquest," said the policeman.

"Were you here, my boys?"

"No," said Thoozy. "We found him here. He told us to come at nine."

"Can we telegraph?" said the doctor.

"Who to? We may look in the desk. These boys can't help us. Go to bed, my lads," he said, in a kindly voice. "You can't do any good here."

They searched the desk. No signs of an address.

There were no cards upon him, and no letters.

"We might," said the policeman, "we might send to the police office of Market Basing for information."

Thoozy followed little Bill to his bedroom. Both were crying and lamenting.

"Bill," said Thoozy, after a pause, "it's all over; he won't help you and me no more. He's dead, is Uncle Dick. Why couldn't I die? I'm no use in the world to nobody. I've got no money: I've only got rheumitiz. Why couldn't I die, and Uncle Dick live? Come, Bill, it's no use stopping here no longer. Let's go, you and me."

"Not back to Mother Kneebone's," said Bill.

"No, not back to Kneebone's. Let's go a long way off, miles away, where they won't find us, and live together. How much money have you got, Bill?"

"I've got a sovereign. He gave it me yesterday."

"I've got three shillin'. He gave it me to-day, and we've got our clothes. Let's go, Bill."

He took the child by the arm, and they stepped stealthily upon the stairs, and crept down, Thoozy leaning on Bill.

When they got into the street, Thoozy led the way eastward. They passed through Covent Garden, and down Drury

Lane. They walked up Fleet Street, Ludgate Hill, Cheapside, and so on to the Whitechapel Road. In fulness of time, after many stoppages — for they slept an hour on this doorstep, and an hour on that — they arrived, when day broke, somewhere in the East End of London, where there were masts of ships innumerable.

"It's the docks," said Thoozy. "Now we'll wait and look about us."

In the afternoon of that fatal day old Hester was pushing Mr. Mortiboy's Bath-chair slowly round the broad gravel paths, according to her wont, in front of the house in Derngate. Lucy Heathcote walked by her uncle's side, now and then saying a kind word to the old man, to rouse and cheer him. She had been more hopeful of his recovery of late days; the worst symptoms had improved; his eyes were brighter; he had begun to be interested in little things about him; and his features had gained back something of their old expression. In her hand was the Bible, from which she was reading favorite passages to her uncle. In health he never would be "read to," in sickness he made no sign of dissent. Lucy's presence soothed him. He loved to have her near him. She knew he liked to hear her voice, though his poor palsied wits seemed to have neither memory nor understanding. So she read on.

She was stopped by a loud cry from Hester.

"O Miss Lucy! look at your uncle, miss! Oh, what *shall* we do!"

Lucy dropped her Bible. The old man's face was suddenly distorted fearfully, and he lay back on his pillows breathing heavily and laboriously. He had had another stroke. The girl thought he would die there. Hester was helpless from fright.

"Run — run — for the nurse! then send for Dr. Kirby. Don't lose a second," cried Lucy.

The nurse came from her tea with her mouth full of bread and butter. She was calm and unmoved in the young girl's grief and the old servant's terror. She was quite equal to the situation. It had been her business to see people die. She showed her superiority by giving her orders calmly.

Hester was despatched for the doctor.

"There's death in his face, miss. Let us take him in. He won't be with us many hours now."

Sobbing grievously, Lucy lent a hand to wheel the dying man into his bedroom. The window opened on to the lawn.

"Oh, how horrible it seems, nurse! Oh! let us try to get him out of his chair! Oh! poor Uncle Richard — my dear — my dear!"

He was a heavy weight, dead weight, for he could not move hand or foot. Both sides were palsied now; but the arms of the nurse were as strong as a man's. With little help from Lucy, she got him on to his bed.

The girl — sole one among his relatives who had ever loved old Ready-money Mortiboy — fell on her knees by the bedside, and prayed to God.

The old man turned his eyes towards her. She saw he was still conscious.

"O uncle," she implored, "try — try to pray; try to follow my words. Uncle Richard," she cried in an agony of grief, "O Uncle Richard, try to make your peace with God!"

But Mr. Mortiboy was unconscious again.

The doctors came in a few minutes. Their language was plain; they did not try to disguise the truth. The period of the old man's life might be reckoned in minutes. They could do nothing, but they staid to see the end.

Ghrimes was sent for. He alone knew Dick's London address. It was past eight o'clock before he came back from the country, where he had been on business. He came, touched his old master's powerless, helpless hand, and hurried away to the telegraph office to summon Dick from London. Vain errand!

For five hours from the time of his last stroke the old man lay on his bed, like one dead. He breathed, but every moment with less strength. To Lucy Heathcote it seemed like five days. Her father and mother were there with her, but she thought only of him who lay dying with them all around his bed.

The death struggle came at nine o'clock. There was an inarticulate sound first from the old man's lips. Then he *spoke*. They all heard it.

He said, "My — son — Dick," and lay there dead.

"Dick ought to be here at half-past ten," John Heathcote whispered to his wife.

CHAPTER XLVII.

DICK's letter to Grace arrived at Park-side before the news of his death, which was brought by one of the bank clerks sent out by Ghrimes at eight o'clock. Grace was reading the letter which promised to find Frank in the course of a week, and had just passed it over to her father, who read it with much satisfaction. Mrs. Heathcote, too, read it, but with different feel-

ings, which she was studying how to express with due effect, when the messenger of evil tidings arrived in Dick's own dog-cart.

The farmer was with him for five minutes. He came back with pale cheeks and quivering lips.

"Dick," he gasped, "Dick — he's gone — dead — he shot himself by accident last night, and died an hour afterwards. Poor Dick! poor Dick!" He recovered after a little. "Strange they both died at the same hour. A telegram came to the police office this morning at eight. They sent round to Ghrimes. Ghrimes has sent for me. Poor Dick! poor Dick!"

The presence of a tragic event like this melted for a moment the animosity of her mother to Grace. They fell into each other's arms, sobbing and crying. Dick was dead. Dick the generous, Dick the noble, Dick the true and brave, — Dick was dead. Nor was it for a full half-hour that Mrs. Heathcote, recovering herself the first, was able dimly to realize the change that this event might cause to her. Dick was dead. Alas! poor Dick! But then — but then — all the fortune, the half million of money, whose would it be? Whose should this be she asked herself, but her own? And already beginning the imaginary reign of splendor over which she had brooded so many years, a dream interrupted by Dick's return, she held her handkerchief to her eyes, and in the intervals of weeping indulged in delicious visions of grandeur.

Mr. Heathcote found Market Basing literally in tears. The people, nearly all tenants of the great Mortiboy estates, were gathered in knots, discussing the event. No news was come except by telegram, but there was scarcely any room for doubt. Dick Mortiboy was dead. The women wept aloud: the men in silence: all had lost a friend, the kindest-hearted friend they ever had; the most ready to help, the most able to help. Not one to whom Dick, in his short reign of four months, had not done some kind action! not one who could not speak from experience of his soft heart and generous nature! As the farmer drove through the crowd that besieged the bank with inquiries, the fresh tears rose to his own eyes, and he got down at the door almost crying like a child.

No one cared about the old man now. Dead? Ready-money dead? Well, he had been a long time dying. He had passed away four months ago from men's minds.

John Heathcote arrived at the bank, went through to the manager's office, where he found Ghrimes was there with Battiscombe,

to whom Ghrimes had sent, after despatching his message to Parkside.

"Do you know of any will, Mr. Battiscombe?" asked Ghrimes.

"None; I have the keys, I suppose we ought to look."

In Dick's private safe, business papers in plenty, but no will. Stay, a packet labelled, "Private: to be opened after my death."

"Open it," said the lawyer.

Ghrimes opened and read it. It was short and concise. It was the confession of Polly Tresler. As he read it, his face assumed a puzzled expression. He handed it over to Mr. Battiscombe, who read it unmoved. Lawyers are seldom surprised at any thing which appears abnormal to the rest of mankind. Ghrimes was shocked at the idea of Dick's secret marriage.

"That explains," he whispered, "the early quarrel between himself and his father. That is the reason why Dick ran away."

"Perhaps. It is hard to say. No great crime for a young fellow to be beguiled by a woman into making a fool of himself," said the lawyer. "It is as pretty a confession of bigamy, trigamy even, as ever I read. Names, dates, churches, all given. Upon my word, this woman is an exceedingly clever person. It is signed by her, and written by poor Mr. Mortiboy himself, dated, too, only a fortnight ago. Mary Tresley — Mary Tresler — I know her, daughter of that drunken old gypsy woman who married my father's gardener, a long time ago. Ah! dear me!"

"What is to be done?"

"Clearly, we must first establish the truth of her statements. I think, Ghrimes, I had better go to town and see to this myself, to prevent complications. Meantime, say nothing to the Heathcotes, to anybody. There may, besides, be a will. To prevent raising hopes in their minds, tell them, what is quite true, that you don't know whether any will was made or not. You know, of course, that, if there is no will, Mrs. Heathcote is the sole heiress; she inherits every thing — every thing."

Then Mr. Heathcote arrived.

"We must have a coroner's inquest," said Mr. Battiscombe, "there must be a funeral, there is every thing to be done. Will you come to town with me?"

"No — yes — what shall I do, Ghrimes?"

"Go, by all means. The train starts in half an hour. I will send a message to Parkside. Go up to town, and see the last of your poor cousin."

They went to London: down to Dick's chambers, where they found the doctor and the old woman in charge. The doctor was standing by the bedside, with his chin on his hands, thoughtfully gazing on the stark

and stiff form which lay covered with a sheet. He gently took off the sheet from the face.

"You are his cousin," he said. "I am taking a last look at the unfortunate man. It is a singularly handsome face, — a face of wonderful sweetness and goodness: a good man, I should say; and the most splendidly built man I ever saw. How could he have done it?"

The lawyer was reading Dick's last words, his only will and testament. John Heathcote solemnly looked upon the features of him who had been almost his own son.

"He says he did it by accident," said Mr. Battiscombe.

"Yes — yes — but how? how? Look here," the doctor drew back the sheet, and showed the spot where the wound had been inflicted. "You see the place. Very well, then; now take this pencil, hold it any way you like, and see if you could shoot yourself in the left side, so far back, if the pencil was a pistol. I defy you to do it. It is very odd, yet he said he did it."

Coroner's inquest that evening. Intelligent jury, after viewing the body, and reading the paper, Dick's last imposture, heard the doctor's doubts, and pooh-poohed them. Shot himself? of course he did. What did it matter how? As if a man would lie about such a thing as that. Verdict: "Accidental Death." The worthy coroner adding some severe strictures upon the frequency of gun accidents, and men's carelessness in the handling of weapons.

Dick was dead. The good that he had time to do lives still; the lives that he quickened, which were dead under the weight of grinding poverty and servitude, if they have relapsed to their old misery, which some may have done, have still the memory of better times, the knowledge of better things, and therefore nourish a healthy discontent. The stirring of the blood which his example and his words caused; his oration to the children which will never die out of their minds; his charity, for the first time in Market Basing, unconnected with religion and three sermons every Sunday; his sympathy with the fallen; his tenderness to the falling; his kind and rough wisdom; his unbookish maxims; his ready hand; his quick insight into humbug, — all these things, and many more, make him to be remembered still. These live after him: the good that he did was a seed sown in fruitful soil, still growing up, destined to be in the after years a goodly tree indeed. And the evil, does that still live? I know Palmiste pretty well, because I've lived in the island; he never did harm there, except to himself; well, you see, I

haven't been to California, or to Texas, or to Mexico, so I do not know. If ever I do go to either or any of those places, I will inquire.

Poor old Ready-money was buried three days after his death in the family vault, unostentatiously, quietly. No one was present at his funeral but Ghrimes and Mr. Heathcote, with the lawyer. No one followed in token of respect. All his money had gone from him before he died. Therefore, all his respect. No property left; of course he was no longer of any account.

It was felt that a public funeral was due to his son. Mr. Hopgood, the mayor, had orders to prepare a simple funeral. But all Market Basing turned out to it. There was no mock mourning. It was no feeling of simple respect for property which brought all the women with the men to see the last of one who had been with them so brief a space, and had made himself so loved by all. Not one but had a kind word of his to remember him by; no poor man but had more than a kind word; no eye that was dry when the earth rattled upon his coffin, and the sublime service of the Church was read over his remains.

His pensioners, the old men and women, were there, loudly wailing. Those whom he had saved from starvation, like old Mr. Sanderson, the cashier of Melliship's bank, were there; those whom he had saved from ruin, like little Tweedy, the builder; those whom he had saved from shame, like Sullivan, the clerk; those for whom he had ever found a word of rough sympathy, and a hand ready to help; above all, the children, awe-stricken and terrified, in whose memory he lived as the universal friend and benefactor. From highest to lowest, from Lord Hunslope to the beggarman, all came to shed tears over the untimely death of Dick Mortiboy. "Truly," said the rector, "charity covereth a multitude of sins."

It was all over now. His burly form was with them no more; the vault was closed: the service read; they would never again hear his ringing laugh, his soft and sympathetic voice. The women would no longer, if they were poor, go to him to pour out their tales of want; if they were well to do, look after him in the street, so handsome, so good, so soft-hearted, so strong. The men would no longer admire him for his skill and strength, or envy him for his prosperity. All was over. Dick Mortiboy was buried.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

If it was hard for Ghrimes, what, as the lawyer said, would it be for Frank?

He received the letter containing Dick Mortiboy's offer. It came on the Monday evening, the day before Dick's murder. He read it with an emotion which he thought he had almost conquered; for he read in it the signal to him to leave his uncongenial life, and go back to his own position. His heart beat high with joy. It was not only Dick's free and generous offer. It was Grace's command that he should take it. It was the recall of his sister and mother to the place where all their friends lived, and all their interests were centred. A letter of recall and pardon to an exile; the restoration of a prince to his own again.

"You've got good news, Mr. Melliship?" asked Patty, looking at his heightened color and flashing eyes.

"Good news? Yes, Patty, very good. The best possible. The best news that ever was brought to any poor, unlucky beggar."

"But his pride. How was he to reconcile his pride to accepting help from the son of his father's enemy?"

Pride! yes, he had some slight grounds for pride. In the first place he could be independent so long as his voice lasted. That great and splendid gift, a tenor voice, was his. It lay with him to accept Mr. Leweson's offer to go to Italy and study for a year or two, and then to return and make his fortune. It was certain that he could do so. But to return to the bank, — to go back to the old life again!

He walked out to call on Mr. Eddrup.

The old man was dressed, and sitting on his chair, too feeble to move.

Frank told him the great offer which had been made him. Perfect confidence existed between the two by this time. Frank had told him all his life, with its disappointments and misfortunes.

"Take it," said Mr. Eddrup. "I, too, have an offer to make you. I shall make it with all the more confidence, if I know that you are rich, and therefore can command the influence of wealth."

"What is it?"

"I have no children, no relations, except a few cousins, who are already wealthy, and who have lost sight of me for many, many years. I want to leave you all my money — in trust — in trust to find some one, if you can, to carry on the work which I have done. Would that you could carry it on yourself!"

"But how shall I find a man?"

"Silver is the man for you. He has enthusiasm; he has energy; he has the power of administration; he has sympathy. Let Silver be my successor."

"Then why not leave him the money in trust?"

"Because he would not quite understand; he would be trying to make it a means of forming a society with rules and creeds, and so crystallize and kill what I want to grow and develop. Remember, young man, faith is the fertilizer; creed is the destroyer. Further, I want you to bequeath the property, after your death, so that it may be used by your successor — whom you will have to find — in the same spirit. I will not lay down rules. I will not add another to the charities which do already so much harm. I want my money to be used always in the most intelligent manner possible to the time: never by a committee."

On Wednesday afternoon he sat down to write his letter. As he began, "My dear Dick," a boy came shouting down the street, with an early edition of the "Echo."

Frank, moved by some impulse, opened the window and beckoned the boy. When he left his letter-writing for a while, and leisurely began to read.

Presently, Patty knocked at the door. She found him staring vacantly before him, with the paper in his hands. The last two days had been a time of trial for the poor girl. She saw, by Frank's manner on Monday, that something was going to happen — she knew not what — which would sever him from her. She had been striving herself, bitterly but steadily, to look the truth in the face. Frank did not love her. In spite of his kind ways and little attentions, the sweeter to Patty because she had never known them before, and was never to know them again, he had never loved her. And she, poor girl, had given all her heart to him. For his sake she spent sleepless nights, devising things which would please him, and careful days, watching to see if she had pleased him. All the little arts which she knew, few enough, she practised to catch his eye. For him she had learned to despise the calling in which she had once almost gloried, and herself for practising it.

She sat down before him, and waited, hands clasped, for him to speak.

"Patty," he said at last, seeing her beside him, "a dreadful thing has happened. Read that. He was my cousin — I was to have been his partner — and now he is dead. I was writing to him when I bought the paper; I am a beggar again!"

"Then you are just the same as you were last Sunday?" Her heart gave a little exultant bound.

"The same? No. Are you the same if, when you are thirsty, some one dashes the cup from your lips? You are thirsty still,

you say. Yes, but you are more than thirsty. You are maddened. Patty, I have had the cup dashed from my lips. I cannot think of poor Dick Mortiboy. I can only think of myself. I am only selfish in my sorrow."

The final blow had fallen. Patty turned white, and bit her lips; for the blood left her cheeks, and she felt as if she would faint. Presently he made an effort to speak.

"How can I go to her now — to the girl I love? How can I say, 'Take me, I am a beggar, and you an heiress; take me'?"

"If she loves you, what matter does it make? If I loved a man, do you think it would matter to me that I had — oh! hundreds of pounds and he had nothing? Mr. Melliship, if she loves you, you must go to her. Perhaps I don't understand. I always thought that when people loved each other they didn't care for money. Is it not so? I mean rich people; of course we poor people never think about it, because we never have any money to think about at all. That is a good thing for us, so far. Tell me more, Mr. Melliship. Does she know that you love her still? Have you promised each other!"

"Yes — too late! Yes — long ago — when I was rich."

"And — and; but I suppose I can't understand. Are you too proud to go to her? But she knows you have no money; there is nothing to hide. If you loved her before, of course you go on loving her now. Do all ladies' hearts change when they have money? What is her name?"

"Grace Heathcote."

"Grace Heathcote — a pretty name — Grace Heathcote. Does she live in the same town with your cousin who is dead? what is it?" She looked at the paper again: "Market Basing?"

"Near it; ten miles out, at a place called Hunslope. At Parkside Farm."

"At Hunslope, ten miles out. At Parkside Farm," she repeated. Then she got up, with lips that quivered in spite of her courage, and went away.

On Saturday, after their early dinner, she plucked up courage to speak to her father.

"Father, I want to say something to you — two things — I can no longer go on at the palace. Don't call me ungrateful, after the pains you've took, and all that. I'm not ungrateful, but I can't bear it any longer. I didn't know, till Mr. Melliship came and talked to me, that there was any thing in it. I thought it was something to be proud of. But now I can't bear the dress, and I see the women in the place sneering, and the horrid men laughing, as

I never saw them before — before Mr. Melliship came."

"Mr. Melliship? Mr. Melliship? Is he in love with you, Patty?"

"No, father," she answered, bursting into tears; "he never loved me; he never said a word of love to me. But, I — oh! I'm only a silly girl, and I fancied he might take a fancy to me. Forgive me, father. It is all folly and wickedness. He loves another girl — a lady. What am I, that I should take the fancy of a gentleman? Only a poor trapeze girl; only a common thing. I can't write well; I can't dress well; I can't do any thing — I don't know how — that he likes. I have tried — oh! how I have tried; and he so good. He never laughed at me; but I could see the difference that he felt. Let him go back to his own people, and let me be alone."

The prophet turned his eyes upon the portrait.

"Jephtha's daughter," he murmured. "Jephtha's daughter — I knew it all along."

"And I can't act any more," said Patty. "Tell Mr. Leweson so. He is very good to us. But I can't do it."

"I've told him, Patty, I've told him; for I had some news for you that I thought would keep till to-morrow. See, now. This is the last night of our performance. You and I and Joey act to-night for the last time. They've got another family — a poor sort, Patty, compared to you and me; but there they are. They begin on Monday. I meant to tell you to-morrow; but I can't keep it. I am to be Mr. Eddrup's clerk. His clerk, Patty, so long as he lives. Think of that. With a salary. I'm to preach every Sunday. And when Mr. Eddrup dies, Mr. Melliship is to have all his money, in trust for the poor people. For these, and all other mercies, God's holy name be praised!"

Patty was silent for a moment.

"I've been very selfish and vain with my foolishness. Now the other thing I had to say: I want a whole sovereign, father, and I want to go away early to-morrow, and be away all day; perhaps all Sunday night and Monday morning. Let me go, and don't ask me the reason why. That is my secret. Give me the money, and let me go. I must go. My heart is breaking till I go. Mr. Eddrup would say I am right. I know he would. Father, if you doubt me, I will go and ask him myself if I am not right."

"Nay; if he thinks you are right, I've got nothing to say. Does Mr. Melliship send you?"

"No — no — no" she crimsoned violently. "Don't say a word to him about it.

A secret, father, and not my own. Oh, don't say a word against it, because I must do it; I must, indeed. It is somebody else's secret. And even he doesn't know."

"I suppose it is Mr. Melliship's, then?" She turned scarlet.

"It is father," she whispered, "and it is for his good. Give me the money and let me go."

"A great sum, Patty; but you're a good girl, and you shall have your own way. I wish it wasn't Sunday, because I'm going to tell the story, in the afternoon, of the Roman Catholic priests. I've been getting it out of Ezekiel; and you'd have liked to hear it, no doubt."

CHAPTER XLIX.

MRS. HEATHCOTE is heiress to all. The gigantic estate of the Mortiboy's, little impaired by Dick's lavish expenditure, is hers, to have and to hold. The fact has been communicated to her officially by Mr. Battiscombe. No will had been made. No frittering away of a great property by miserable bequests: nothing left to collateral branches of the family; Ghymes and the Melliships out of it altogether. All Mrs. Heathcote's.

In the first stupor of delight she sat tranquil, scarcely able to face the fact that she was rich beyond her dreams. Then, and before poor Dick was buried, she began to make plans and settle how they were in future to live. She talked, the sealed fountain of her ambition once set moving again, perpetually on this one topic, — what they should do, what changes they were to make in their style of living, how they were to astonish the world.

"We shall, of course," she said to her daughter, "go to London to live. Your father must give up his vulgar habits."

"My father has no vulgar habits," said Grace, always rebellious.

"Grace, don't contradict. Is it, or is it not, vulgar to smoke pipes after dinner?" No answer being given to this clincher, she went on. "We shall dine at half-past seven; go into society; balls, I suppose, every night; we shall be presented at court, of course; your father will give up his poky farm, and we shall buy an estate somewhere. Ghymes will go on managing the bank, though I must say the salary he draws seems ridiculous. Pictures again: I suppose we must patronize art. My dear, it will be very hard work at first, but you may trust your mother to do the best for you; and when my girls do marry — if they marry with my approbation" — giv-

ing a glance at Grace, "they may depend upon my generosity."

"I am going to marry Frank Melliship," said Grace quickly. Lucy said nothing. It was a constant trial to the poor girls to bear this grating upon their nerves; the more trying because they had to disguise it even from each other, and because it was so essentially different to that straightforward, honest simplicity, and even delicacy, of their father. There are some men, without the slightest refinement in manner, not at all the men to be invited to dinner, who are yet the most perfect and absolute masters of good breeding, inasmuch as they never offend in their speech, and go delicately about among the tender corns of their friends. Such was John Heathcote. To him the doctor communicated the three or four lines which Dick had forced him to write. John took them to lawyer Battiscombe, in hopes that they would give his girls a claim to the estate which else his wife would have. What manner of life his would be, if Lydia Heathcote got it all, he trembled to think. No use: the money was all his wife's. Battiscombe told him of Polly; he explained the law of the land as regards married women's property; and advised him as to the carrying out of Dick's intentions, in the spirit, if not in the letter.

Thus fortified, Farmer John felt himself strong enough to fight his battles, and began to put his foot down.

He let his wife run on till she was fairly exhausted, on the subject of improvements and changes, then he quietly asserted himself:—

"When you've done making your plans, Lydia, you may as well consult me, and ascertain what I am going to do."

"John Heathcote, who is the owner of the Mortiboy property?" asked Lydia with withering contempt.

"I am. Your husband is."

She gasped with astonishment.

"Do you mean to tell me, John Heathcote, that I am not the possessor of every thing?"

"Certainly not. All the personalty is mine absolutely. All the realty is mine so long as you live. When you die, you may bequeath it to whom you will."

"Is that the law? Do you dare to assert that the law of England allows that? And they call this a Christian and a Protestant country."

"Let us understand one another, Lydia. We are plain people, and intend to remain so. You and I are old, and unfit for the society to which we were not brought up."

"John! I unfit! Pray, do you forget that I was seven years at the best and

most select boarding-school in Market Basing?"

"I dare say they finished you very well for a farmer's wife, such as you've been for five and twenty years. No, no; we are too old and too wise to change, Lydia. No town life for us. I mean to go on exactly the same."

"You imagine, John, that I am going to consent to live like that, with all the money coming in? Do you call yourself a churchman, John? Do you know that it's your duty—your positive duty—to keep up your station? I, for one, shall not consent. So there."

"You need not, Lydia," said her husband quietly. "If you refuse, you must live elsewhere. And I don't know where you'll find the money. Don't be downcast, wife. A little extra finery you can have, if you like, and spend any thing in reason, consistent with your position. I'm a farmer. The girls can spend the money when they marry. Another thing: whatever Dick intended to do, it is our duty to do. Now read this."

He put into his wife's hands Dick's last few words.

"Poor Dick! His last wishes. We must obey them."

"Papa," said Grace eagerly, "you are really going to do all that Dick intended should be done?"

"All, Grace. Every thing."

"Then consult George Ghrimes about another thing, papa. Ask him what Dick was going to do about him; and—ask, papa."

"If there's secrets going on, I suppose I had better go," said her mother. "John Heathcote, when I married you, little did I think that I was marrying a man capable of sheltering himself behind the law, in order that he might continue in his low and grovelling position."

John Heathcote laughed. It was never his plan to argue with his wife, else the argument would have been perennial.

The next day, being three days after the funeral, Mrs. Heathcote thought she might as well make a visit to Derngate and the villa, and take possession of the things there, whatever there might be to have.

The garden door was open, and the front door was open.

She walked into the dining-room—no one there—and into Dick's smoking-room.

In his easy chair, in deepest widow's weeds, with a handkerchief to her eyes, sat Polly.

It was her greatest *coup*, though it failed. She learned the death of Dick from the papers, and instantly made up her mind what to do. Without going through the

formality of acquainting Capt. Bowker with her intentions, she bought a widow's cap and crape, got into the train, and came to Market Basing. She would get her confession back first, and then, after laying hands on every thing portable, would come to such terms as could, in a short space of time, and before the thing was found out, be obtained.

"Mary!" cried Mrs. Heathcote, "what is the meaning of this?"

"Mrs. Richard Mortiboy, Mrs. Heathcote, I should say Cousin Heathcote," said Polly, wiping her eyes again. "Oh, what a dreadful thing it is to lose your husband, and him but just returned from foreign parts and savages!"

"Mary! woman! you are mad!"

She shook her head, and sobbed the faster.

"Poor Dick! I shall never see his like again. Mrs. Heathcote, won't you sit down? It's my house, and all Dick's money is mine; but we sha'n't fall out. Families ought to live peaceful. Sit down, young ladies."

Grace knew that she was speaking the truth, but silence was best. They remained standing. Polly still gave from time to time a convulsive heave, by which she meant to express the poignancy of her sorrow.

"Perhaps you will explain yourself, Mary Tresler," said her late mistress.

"Ho! there's no objection of explaining. None in the world, Mrs. Heathcote, Cousin Heathcote. I've been married to Dick Mortiboy for twelve years and more, married in London, at St. Pancriddle's Church, where you may go yourself and look. And now I'm come to claim my rights, as in duty bound, and an honest woman should. Don't think I'm bearing any malice for old times, Mrs. Heathcote, though you always were a screw, and you know it. It isn't the place now nor the time, when I'm weeping over the last bier of my poor dear lost Dick, to throw your cold mutton and your broken victuals in your teeth; no, nor your eight pounds a year, paid to your cousin's lawful wife, nor your flannels at Christmas. No; let's be friends all round, I say. I only come up this morning, and here I'm going to stick. Perhaps, as you're here, you'll tell me where Dick's safe is where he keeps his papers; because that's mine, that is, and there's something particular of my own that I want back again."

It was awkward for Polly, in the execution of her grand *coup*, that she had no conception where the safe was, in which she knew that her written confession lay, nor indeed what a safe was like when she saw one. She had a notion that it was a

wooden box, kept probably in his bedroom, the breaking open of which would put her in possession of the dangerous document; but she could find no wooden box, though she had searched the whole house through, and she naturally began to feel uneasy. Where had Dick put it? Mrs. Heathcote was speechless. This, indeed, was a calamity far worse than the obstinacy of her husband. That the perfidious Dick should actually have had a wife, her own servant, and have said nothing to anybody, was a thing so utterly beyond the scope of her experience, that her brain seemed to be wandering. Her lips parted, but she said nothing.

"Oh, it's a dreadful thing!" Polly went on, "to be a widow! And me so young; and such a good husband! I hope you may never experience it, Mrs. Heathcote; never, Cousin Heathcote. It's a dreadful thing, and money won't make up for it. What's money to the loss of my Dick?"

"Grace," said Mrs. Heathcote, "am I in my senses? Is this woman mad?"

"Woman!" cried the bereaved one, starting up in a violent rage. "No more woman than you are. How dare you call me woman? For two pins, Mrs. Heathcote, I'd scratch out your eyes. You and your cold mutton, indeed, and no followers allowed. But I'll comb you down yet, you see if I don't."

The door opened, and Mr. Ghymes appeared. In his hand a bundle of papers.

"Oh!" he said coolly, seeing Polly, "Joe, the stable-boy, told me you were here. Now, what may you be wanting in this house? No nonsense, you know, because it won't do with me."

"Mr. Ghymes, my clerk," said Polly, "my servant and the manager of my bank; don't be insolent, young man, or I'll give you warning, and send you about your business, sharp enough; so down on your knees, if you please. Other people can manage a bank as well as you." All the same, her heart misgave her at the sight of the calm, cold man of business, who evidently knew exactly what he was saying, and was not a whit moved at her brave words.

"We will talk about discharging afterwards. At present, you had better go yourself. Yes; I mean that you must go, and that at once. Any insults to these ladies will be severely punished. Now go, or I will speak more plainly."

"I sha'n't go." Polly sat herself down in the armchair, and spread out her skirts in a very determined manner.

"You won't? Very well." Mr Ghymes stepped outside. Voices were heard, and steps in the passage; and Polly's cheek visibly blanched.

He came back. Behind him were Mr. Battiscombe, Farmer John, and a third person, a stranger to the rest, at sight of whom Polly sprang up and sat down again, as if she had received a mortal blow. He was a middle-aged man, with a red beard, and blue eyes, and a nervous, hesitating manner, who came with the others, half unwillingly; no other, in fact, than Capt. Bowker.

"Now, ma'am," said Mr. Ghrimes, "who is this gentleman?"

"Oh," said Polly, "I'll take it out of you for this. Only you wait."

"Let me explain," said the lawyer. "We suspected your little game, you see, and we took our steps: had you watched, followed you to the station, found where you were going to, and brought Capt. Bowker, your husband, down after you by the next train."

"Her husband!" cried Mrs. Heathcote. "You wicked, wicked woman! Mr. Battiscombe, what is the extreme penalty which the law exacts for this offence? Is it twenty years, or is it fifty? I forget at this moment. I know they used to hang for it in the good old days."

"What's more," said the captain in a husky voice, "they've told me your whole history, and I find I can be free whenever I like. So, Polly, you may go your own way. By the Lord, if you come near me again, I *will* be free, and you shall be in a prison. I'm going back to Skimp's. You sha'n't say I hid myself. There I stay: find me out there if you dare."

"You calf of a sea-captain, do you think I want to come after you? I despise you too much," said Polly grandly.

"And her mother in the workhouse!" ejaculated Mrs. Heathcote, as if the fact had an important bearing on the case.

"Had you not better go now?" asked Ghrimes. "It will be well for you to go by the next train; it leaves in twenty minutes. I will drive you to the station."

Polly removed the white cap of widowhood, and laid it on the table.

"You may have it, Mrs. Heathcote. mum. Keep it for my sake, and be very careful about your cold pork. Go on locking up the key of the beer-cellar, and don't let the maids have no followers, then you'll go on being as much beloved as you always have been much beloved, if you go on, that is, as you always have been a going on. Good-by, young ladies. Miss Grace, I'd do you a good turn if I could, because you deserve it, and you know why: you was always the best of the bunch. Good-by, Miss Lucy: eat and drink a bit more, and don't read too many tracts, and you'll be as pretty as your sister some day, but never so

good. She knows how to hold her tongue, she does. One good thing," she concluded, looking at her husband with a gaze of concentrated hatred, which caused his knees to shake beneath him, "one good thing, one gracious good thing, I'm rid of a poor-spirited barrel of salt sea pork. I sha'n't see you no more. Ugh! you and your verses! If I get home first, I'll BURN 'em all."

"You can't, Polly," said her husband meekly; "I've got 'em in my coat-tail pocket, every one, with a new 'Ode to Resignation,' which I composed when you were asleep."

She passed out, holding her head high. Ghrimes followed her, and drove her to the station.

CHAPTER L.

It is Sunday, nearly a fortnight after Dick's death. The Heathcotes, returned from church, are on the lawn in front of the house. The noise of wheels on the private road leading to the farm is heard, an unusual thing unless when poor Dick Mortiboy drove over on Sunday.

It was a town "fly," — one of those delightful vehicles which are found at country stations, which have all the bad qualities of the London growler without any of its good ones, always supposing that it has good ones. It drove up to the door, and a girl got down and looked timidly at the group on the lawn. A pretty girl, a wonderfully pretty girl, pale faced, bright eyed, with regular if rather common-place features and a great mass of rich brown hair, neatly dressed in a colored stuff frock, brown jacket, and a bundle of wild flowers in her hand. She could not resist the temptation of stopping the fly, to pick them from the hedge. She opened the gate, and walked in, coloring painfully.

Mr. Heathcote slowly walked down the gravel path to meet her.

"Mr. Heathcote?" she asked. "Oh! I don't want you: I want Miss Grace Heathcote. Which is Miss Grace Heathcote?"

"I am Grace Heathcote. Pray, what can I do for you?"

Patty — it was Patty Silver — looked at her for a few minutes, and then, clasping her hands together, burst into tears.

For she contrasted herself with the girl who stood before her: herself, common, half educated, badly dressed, with this presence of a lady, glorious in her beauty and her grace.

The unconscious rival looked at her in wonder, but did not speak.

"Let me speak somewhere alone with you, Miss Heathcote," said Patty, "quite alone. I have something very important to tell you."

"Papa, I am going to take this young lady to the drawing-room. Do not wait dinner for me. Come with me please."

She sailed across the lawn, taking poor little Patty after her, into the drawing-room, where Mrs. Heathcote heard the door shut and locked.

"John," she cried, putting her head out of the window, "pray who is that young woman?"

"I don't know," said John.

"John, if you were half a husband, to say nothing of a father, you would have known that it was your duty to bring her to me first. Secrets, indeed! I will have no secrets in my house, I can tell you. Grace, let me in this moment."

"Is that you, mamma?" answered her daughter, in the clear, resolute tones which always made her mother quail and give way, "Is that you, mamma? Go on with dinner; do not wait for me; I shall be ready presently."

Mrs. Heathcote knocked once more at the door, but faintly; and, finding no attention bestowed upon her, retreated again.

Dinner was served, but Grace did not return. So they sat down without her, John Heathcote alone being able to take his meal with the usual sabbath enjoyment.

"I believe, John," said his wife, "that you would go on eating if the world was on fire."

"Well, Lydia, if my not eating could put out the fire, I would stop. If not, I dare say I should eat so long as I was hungry, unless the fire was burning my toes."

"John, you are blasphemous. On Sunday, too, and your daughter locked up with a stranger, talking secrets!"

"What if she is? Grace's secrets are not mine. There can't be any harm in Grace's secrets, poor girl; and she's welcome to a bushel of them. Something to do with Frank, I expect. That reminds me, Lydia. A week before his death, Dick had a deed of partnership drawn out, but not executed, between himself, Frank Melliship, and George Ghymes."

"Not executed," said Lydia.

"No, but the intention was the same. I have had it drawn out again between myself, Frank Melliship, and George Ghymes, on poor Dick's plan. I am going to take them both into partnership with me."

"John Heathcote," said his wife, "it is a dreadful thing, a really dreadful thing, to see the way you are going on. If this

partnership is carried into effect, I shall feel it my duty, as a wife and a mother — to — to —"

"What will you do, Lydia?"

"To call in London doctors, and have your brain examined for softening. It must be softening, John."

John put down his knife and fork, and laughed till the tears ran down his face. The idea of his brain softening was so novel, so unexpected, so good, that he laughed again and again. He was not in the least angry.

"You always would have your joke, Lydia," he said, with a choke. "Softening. Ho! ho! ho! And you've always called me the hardest man you know. But I'm glad you approve of the partnership. Very glad. Because, though I am the administrator of all this money, I always feel that I'm doing it for you, Lydia. It's well you are a good-hearted woman — very well. Some women would have made a fuss, and objected. Not you. That's what I like about you, wife. You never object when it's no good, and you're always ready to back me up when I'm doing what's right."

I have never been able to make up my mind, whether this speech of John's was stupid, or whether it was sarcastic. I fancy it was the latter, and that John was by no means so simple as his wife thought him.

"Now," said Grace, in the drawing-room, "sit down, and tell me what you came to tell me."

She sat on the sofa, and Patty on the easy chair by her side. The girl was lost in contemplating the length to which civilization can go in furnishing a room; the bright draperies and the dainty appointments. She looked up hesitatingly.

"Do all ladies have rooms like this?"

"Yes, I suppose so. Why? There is nothing very grand in this room, is there?"

Patty sighed. "You should see mine," she said, "and you would know what I mean. Miss Heathcote, I came to-day from London. I came from Mr. Melliship."

"From Frank?"

"From Mr. Frank Melliship. He does not know I'm come. Let me tell my story from the beginning. He lives with father. So we know him, you see. Last Monday week I saw him reading a letter, and looking bright and happy. You know, miss, he'd been terribly pulled down and worried of late. He told me he had got good news — the best of news; and he went out, and up the street I saw him walking as if the ground was made of India-rubber. Then he came home, and sang all over the house like a lark. Next day, Tuesday that

was, he said to me, 'Patty,' — he always calls me Patty, miss, because father does, I suppose, — 'Patty, I sha'n't write my letter till to-morrow, because I'm waiting to find out how to answer the most generous man in the world.' And he pleased himself all day drawing pictures — such pictures — I've got them all. On Wednesday, I went in at half-past two. He had his writing-table before him, and he had the 'Echo' in his hand. 'Patty,' he said, 'he's dead — and she is lost to me!'

Grace turned color. "Go on," she said. "She's lost to me!" Then he told me all about you, Miss Heathcote; how he loved you, and you loved him; and how Mr. Mortiboy was going to make him rich, so that you could marry, but he died and could not. And then he told me that he could never go to you now, because you were rich and he was a beggar. This was last Wednesday week. He told me with the tears running down his handsome face, where you lived, and all about it. . . . Well, Miss Heathcote, he's been getting lower and lower ever since; he doesn't eat, he doesn't sing, he never draws, he sits at the window with his head in his hands, and never speaks at all. I couldn't bear to see it; so I bought a railway guide, and found out the Sunday trains, and made father give me money to pay my return ticket, and came down here to tell you all about it. Miss Heathcote, it can't be that you're going to throw him over because you are rich? It can't be that you don't love him any more because he is poor? Don't tell me that — don't let him go on killing himself. Don't be proud. Ladies are mostly too proud, I think. And so are gentlemen. He will never come to you. O Miss Heathcote! if I loved — if he loved me — and I was rich, I would go to him and kiss him, and say, 'Frank, what does it matter whether you have any money or not?' I am only a poor girl, Miss Heathcote, and no education, and get my living in a way I am almost ashamed to say — I'm a trapeze girl; but I should be too proud — oh! I should be too proud to let my love die when a word would save him."

"What is your name?" asked Grace, the tears running down her face.

"Patty Silver. I am only the girl that performs on the trapeze, at the Music Hall. I do it with my father, though."

"Patty Silver — you love Frank Melliship yourself?"

Patty covered her face with her hands.

"I do — I do," she murmured. "Forgive me, Miss Heathcote. He never looked at me. I let myself love him without thinking. Who could help loving him? But he only loves you. He thinks of you. He

draws your portrait always. Me? As if a gentleman like Mr. Melliship would think of me. But I loved him — oh! me — me — I loved him; and I love him always."

Grace knelt down, and took Patty's face in her hands, and looked at it.

"Poor Patty! Poor little girl! You will get over your love some day. Your trial is hard. What shall I do for you, for the joy and gladness you have brought me? I knew he would be faithful; but you know — girls are so — there were times when I doubted. Now wait a moment: you will see that I am not too proud, and not so cold a fine lady as you think me, perhaps. Wait here for one moment only."

She went into the dining-room, where her father was just opening a bottle of port.

"Papa, come into the other room with me."

"More secrets, of course," said Mrs. Heathcote.

John Heathcote, with a sigh, followed his daughter.

"Papa, this young lady comes to me, unknown to Frank, to tell me that he is ill and miserable. He got a letter from Dick the day before his death, offering him a partnership in the bank. Then he saw the death in the paper, and has been prostrated ever since. What ought we to do?"

"First thing, let him know that he is to be a partner. Make him a new offer."

"You must do that yourself. What next?"

"Why, we must go and find him out as soon as we can, and bring him back here."

"What a good father it is!" said his daughter, wheedling him. "He always says the wisest things, and the kindest things. We must find him. Patty here will take us to him; you must tell him — you must go yourself; we must find him at once — we will go together — at once — to-day, by the afternoon train. We will go back with Patty, will we not?"

Here she gave away, and fell upon Patty's neck, crying and laughing. Lucy came running up stairs. Her mother staid below.

"They may manage their own secrets themselves," she said, taking a glass of port with a bitter feeling.

"Lucy, my dear. My carpet-bag with things for the night, and your sister's too. Pack up quickly. Grace, take this young lady with you, and have some dinner, and give her some." He went down, and found his wife in a sour and crabbed frame.

"Lydia, my dear," he said, with a cheerful smile, "I've got good news for you;

we've found Frank Melliship. I'm going up to town with Grace to bring him back. He's all right. We'll marry them in a month, and you shall dance at their wedding, my girl. Give me a glass of wine."

He drank off hers, without an apology. "Oh! I forgot to tell you, — keep this a great secret, — I had a talk with Lord Hunslope yesterday about things. He hinted that though Grace would not have Lord Launton, perhaps his lordship would have better luck with Lucy. Eh! Lydia, what do you think of a coronet for your girl?"

"Lucy, dear girl! she always was my own girl — took after my family and me," said Mrs. Heathcote, mollified. "Grace was always a Heathcote. Well, well, you must have your own way, I suppose. Come back to-morrow, John, if you can. Dear Lucy! how she would become a coronet. After all, John, I hardly think poor dear Grace is quite the woman to be a countess. There's a little too much independence about her; too much of the Heathcote about her; not quite subdued enough in her manner. She will do admirably as a banker's wife, no doubt. Is the young person properly looked after?"

"Grace will do that."

"Then sit down, John, for five minutes and talk. Don't be racing up and down the stairs after dinner. At your time of life, too. You might get apoplexy, and go off suddenly, like poor Mr. Hawthorne, only three weeks ago. You think the earl means what he says?"

"The earl is straightforward enough, at any rate. He is poor and we are rich. Think on what we ought to give Lucy if it comes off. Don't say any thing to the girl. She's as timid as a fawn, and would only run away and hide herself. But think what we ought to give, and tell me. The earl — whisper now — owes the bank fifty thousand pounds. There, wife; I've given you something to think over while I am gone."

Mrs. Heathcote kissed Grace with a really maternal affection again, whispering, "Bring him back, dear; you have your mother's approbation now. But you must forgive me for being a little disappointed before, you know. He was always my favorite, Frank, after poor Dick. As for Lord Launton, I forgive you. And no doubt it is all for the best. Give Frank my best love, dear — and bless you."

Frank was sitting in his little room alone and miserable. Mr. Silver was gone off to chapel. There was nobody in the house. A cab came rumbling along the street, and stopped at the door. He did not hear it.

Patty opened the door with her latch-key, and led her guests up stairs. He looked up as they came into the room. It was Grace, with her father.

"Frank," whispered Grace, as he caught her in his arms, "you were too proud to come to us, so we have come to you."

"Not to let you go again, my boy," said her father, shaking him by the hand.

"Never again, Frank, never again. We part no more."

Love and joy in that little room. Up stairs, Patty lying on her bed, trying to stop the tears and sobs that shake her frame. The prophet was right. She was even as the daughter of Jephthah, doomed to lament her loneliness among the mountains all her days.

ENVOY.

THREE farewell tableaux. The first in Paris. It is at St. Cloud, when, close by the ruins of the château, in a small, close room, they are trying the Communist prisoners in the winter of last year. A long table, or a platform, behind which are sitting a dozen officers, whose cold, stern faces bode little mercy to the poor creatures brought before them. One by one they are brought up to receive their sentence. They are cowed by imprisonment and suffering; they are ragged, starved, miserable. Mostly, they receive their sentences, which are comparatively light, with a kind of gratitude, because they know the worst. There is one exception. He is a thin man, with keen, bright eyes. His cheeks and chin are covered with the ragged beard of three months' growth. His black hair is thick and matted; his clothes, such as they are, scarcely hold together upon him. He alone of the prisoners stands up before his judges with an air of defiance. Accused at first of being taken with arms in his hand, he is now, on further evidence, charged with complicity in the murder of the archbishop. He has neither boots nor shoes; a rag is round his neck; he shivers in the cold December air; but his hands are delicate, shapely, and white, — the hands of a gentleman. He is asked his name and profession. He shrugs his shoulders and spreads out his hands.

"Bah! It is the hundredth time. I am tired of it. Let us finish. My name is Lafleur. I was in the ranks of the Commune. Did I love the cause of the Communist? No more than yourselves. Do I love your cause? Perhaps as much as you do. Did I assist at the execution of the

archbishop? I did. Now, M. le Président, your sentence."

It came swiftly enough.

In the cold gray of the morning, he stands against a wall with his hands in his pockets, a cigar in his mouth, and a mocking smile on his lips. No word of repentance? None. Of scoffing or blasphemy? None. The roll of the rifles for a moment, and the next, a dead man falls, face downward, on the ground. He could bear most things that fate had to bring; but the misery, the filth, the degradation, the starvation, the cold, rags, famine, evil companionship, to which the Versaillists have condemned their unhappy enemies, were too much for him. So he confessed, threw up the cards, and was sentenced.

Down at the docks there is a certain particularly dirty and muddy crossing, which requires in all weathers, so deeply rooted is its delight in mud, the constant attendance of a broom. It is wielded by a boy, small and thin, but strong and healthy. He answers to the name of Bill. On sunny days he is accompanied by a friend older than himself, with a curiously wizened and lined countenance, like that of an old man. He does not work himself, but sits in the sunshine on the steps of a door which is never opened. Here the cold winds come not, and there is a southern aspect.

"Thoozy," says the boy, "it's more than a year since Uncle Dick died."

"So it is, old chap; so it is. Poor Uncle Dick! But we've done pretty well since then; haven't we, old chap? What's the whole duty of a boy, Bill, as he used to learn you?"

"Never prig, never tell lies," — he runs off Dick's ten commandments on his fingers, just as he had been taught.

"Right you are, Bill. Go away from England. Yes, we'll go some day, old chap, when we've saved a little money, and you've got stronger. Uncle Dick was a good sort, Bill, I can tell you. We sha'n't meet no more Uncle Dicks in the world. Let's remember all he used to say, and act on it, Bill, my boy."

Another scene. It is evening: three people are standing in the moonlight, in the square, place, or principal open street of Market Basing, before a newly-erected statue, unveiled that morning with much ceremony, bands of music, and many speeches. They are Frank and Grace, with them Patty Silver.

"I am glad it is like Dick," said Grace,

with a sigh. "I couldn't bear that our noble Dick should look ugly and unlike. I'll tell you about him, Patty, some day, when we have it all to ourselves, and you want to learn a long story about a good and a great hearted man. Let us go in now. I wanted to see it when all the people were gone, and have a little cry all to myself over it."

Patty is staying with them. She has given up her profession, and lives with her father; he preaches every evening, and will probably some day be revered as the founder of a new sect. Life is made easy for him by Mr. Eddrup, who lingers still, and by Grace Melliship, Frank's wife. Patty will never marry. To have loved a gentleman, not to have been loved by one, has been an education for the girl. She can never love one of her own class. But she is not unhappy, and among the poor people of her neighborhood finds plenty to do in the way of help and advice. And sometimes Grace gets her to come down to Market Basing, and stay quietly with them till the roses come back to her cheeks, and she can return to her work, a life of unknown and unprofessional self-denial and toil.

Last time I was at Market Basing, I made a curious discovery. Looking at Dick's statue, I read the inscription. The usual flourish of trumpets was on the front, setting forth his unblemished moral character, his philanthropy, his generosity, his great schemes for benefiting the human race. On one side was a passage in Greek: —

"Πολὺν ἀνθρώπων ἰδὲν ὅσους καὶ νοὸν ἔγω."

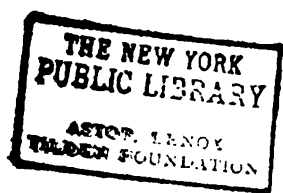
This was the rector's doing.

On the other side was a line of English: —

"Write me as one who loves his fellow-men."

This was Ghrimes's.

On the back, right in the corner, as if put there furtively, in quite small letters, "Rev. xiii. 4." I heard afterwards that Lucy Heathcote, or, to give her new name, Lady Launton, chose a text, which, not being approved of, she privately instructed the sculptor to insert where it could not be seen, anxious, good little soul, that religion should have some part. The sculptor put it in, but made a mistake as to the reference — a most unfortunate one, as I found on looking out the text to which attention is thus publicly called. By great good luck, nobody but Lady Launton and myself has found it out.





LOVE AND VALOR.

BY
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LOVE AND VALOR.

CHAPTER I.

ROOMS IN THE OLD QUAD.

I DON'T think there is a finer street in the world, taking it with all its associations, than "the High" at Oxford. If you stand before the residence of the Principal of Brasenose and look down it, you must own that you have seldom seen a nobler sweep of buildings. There is St. Mary's Church, with its graceful spire, and the noble front of All Souls'; and on the other side the crumbling façade of old University; and farther on — too far off to let you see how ugly it is — comes Queen's; and beyond that, again, the beautiful tower of Magdalen, with its sweet chimes.

You reflect how many great men have trod this very ground, — what giants have been reared in those solemn old colleges, — what golden-mouthed divines have thrilled young hearts with devotional enthusiasm in that old University church, — what a noble stream of England's wisest and best and noblest has flowed down this quiet old street from time immemorial, — a stream that widened out anon to enrich, to honor, to beautify our country.

It is a fine wide street, this old High Street of the University City, with a roadway that dwindles London streets into lanes, and a pavement so broad that it is a luxury only to walk on it and feel that you cannot be hustled.

It is like no other street that I know. Wherever you may chance to go, you never see a street that makes you say to yourself, "Ah! how like the High!" It is —

"Whoop! Hurra! Yoicks!"

It is quite impossible to continue a vein of serious reflection when four young gentlemen in caps and gowns whisk suddenly round the corner out of Radcliffe Square, rush on the ruminating stranger standing in front of the residence of the Principal of B. N. C., impinge violently on his diaphragm,

and skurry off again after brief but fervent apologies, still vociferating, —

"Who-o-o-o-p! Yo-icks! Ho-o-o-o-ray!"

Away they go, helter-skelter, behaving just as a parcel of children should do in their nursery, and regarded by the townsfolk in much that light. One long-legged youth leads, waving an oblong slip of paper in his hand. When I said just now that these lads were in caps and gowns I was a little in error, which may be pardoned, considering the sudden manner in which they presented themselves on the field of sight and obtruded themselves on the region of digestion. They are not, strictly speaking, in cap and gown. They wear their caps, it is true, and very curious caps they are, in some instances loose bags of rattling board, which puts in a very white and new deal-like appearance at the corners, or rather at the holes where corners should be. Their gowns, however, are, for the most part, carried over their arms; why, this deponent will not take upon himself to say. An undergrad's gown, or rather what he makes it, is not cumbrous wear, and would be less in his way on his back than it is when slung on his arm. It is a mere square of stuff, the shorter the better, *pace* undergrads, and at rare intervals adorned with one or two streamers. I may add, that streamers are the exception rather than the rule.

It is perhaps because the statutes direct that the gown shall be worn, not carried, that the lads prefer the making porters of themselves to the less inconvenient plan of wearing their academical *toga*. There are, to the best of my recollection, two questions which a young man at Oxford asks himself before doing anything. The first is, "Is it nice?" If this be settled in the affirmative, there is no necessity to prolong the inquiry. But if the answer be doubtful, or even if it be in the negative, there is a second proposition, "Is it wrong?" And I am bound to say that if the reply be to the effect that it

is directly opposed to statutory discipline, you may consider the thing done.

However, we are losing sight of our excited young friends, who tear full speed along the High to Carfax, and dash down "St. Ald's." Opposite the Post Office they meet the proctor, who looks half inclined to stop them and read them a lecture *De Vestitu Academico*, but, observing the little bit of paper which creates the excitement, smiles, and lets them go unchallenged. So they rush with much hallooing through the gate of Denbigh College and across the Old Quad towards a set of rooms on the ground-floor of No. 3 staircase. At the window of those rooms, if you had been very quick, you might have caught sight of a somewhat anxious face. For it was about the time when the Clerk of the Schools should be giving out the testamurs, and if there were not one for "Edvardus Harding e Coll: Denb:" the proprietor of the anxious face would feel himself in the most unpleasant position of being "ploughed for Smalls."

Edward Harding had been well thought of by the head-master of the school from which he had been transferred to Oxford, and was considered likely to reflect credit on that establishment. Unluckily, however, when the necessity for application which existed at school was withdrawn, the application vanished too. A cool tankard of beer and a pipe after breakfast are delicacies which a busy man dreams of, — which a lad at Oxford hardly realizes the full meaning of. But they are, it must be owned, conducive to idleness, and when Edward Harding suddenly found his last chance for "Smalls" staring him in the face through fragrant clouds of smoke, and through the glass bottom of his pewter, he found himself slightly unprepared for the examination.

He took stock of his learning. He could manage two Greek plays, he thought, — Sophocles for preference, — provided they did n't put him on in the choruses. And he could do three books of Horace's odes, — but was not quite sure about the *Ars Poetica*. His real difficulty would be the mathematics. He must set to work at them at once. So he sat up over Euclid, — fell asleep over it, — set his book alight, — burned all the corner of his table, and so scared himself that he did not repeat the offence of trying to read up for his examination. No wonder, then, that he was a little nervous, and peered anxiously into the quadrangle as the fatal hour approached.

Yes! they were coming towards staircase No. 3. But it might be for Brotherton, who had rooms overhead. Brotherton, commonly known as "Chicken Broth" in

college on account of his whiteness and the quantity of bone there was about him, was generally considered a pretty safe man. He had worked himself into an unparalleled state of whiteness and boniness in preparing for the Schools, and was looked upon as a certain pass. That he was not quite so sure himself was evident from the fact that he had put his name down as Hoskins Brotherton, thereby gaining a few extra days to prepare for *viva voce* examination. H coming on for that trying ordeal several days after B.

But the testamur we have watched fluttering in the hands of the tall undergraduate all along the High and down St. Ald's is not for "Chicken Broth." That estimable youth was plucked, like his sponsorial chicken, and had to communicate the unpleasant fact to the old cock at home and the maternal hen, who clucked very pathetically over it, and declared that there must have been a conspiracy among the examiners. But there was not. What was in fault was the system. The College possessed a master and three resident fellows, who were called tutors. These gentlemen gave lectures in the morning, which everybody cut as long as it was possible, and paid no attention to when it was n't. Beyond this the tutors took no interest at all in the lads at their college.

Yes, they did, though; they took an interest in the shape of tutor's fees for the work they did n't do! Those men who could afford it employed private tutors, or "coaches," as they were called. Those who could not afford it, like poor Chicken Broth, had to find their way as best they could, and this unhappy fellow had run his head against a wall.

Edward Harding had the advantage of his elder brother's experience. James Harding was a scholar of Trinity, who was at this time reading for honors in Moderations, so he was able to assist his brother, — whenever his brother was inclined to accept assistance. He had, at all events, been able to prime him for certain stock questions, and to give him odd bits of information which old University men understand fully.

In rushed the noisy party, then, headed by Tom Friston, — called Tom because his name was really Walter, — and there was more shouting, and a good deal of dancing, and a general shaking of hands.

"Congratulate you, old boy!"

"By Jove! I can tell you fellows I was in a pretty scare about it."

"Yes, I know you were. I saw you looking very blue when I peeped into the

Schools. Gave you second papers, did n't they?"

"Yes, in Euclid and arithmetic. I never could collar mathematics. But I'd the most awful bit of luck in the world."

"What was that, old chap?"

"Why, they gave me a blessed proposition to do that I had n't the vaguest notion of, — something about the squares of the sides subtending the right angle being — O, bother, you know. Well, I could n't do it, but I thought I'd evolve it out of my inner consciousness, as the newspaper chaps say, and when I'd done it I took it up, and little Furness said I might go out for an hour. Out I went, met my brother Jim, and told him all about the angles subtending the what's-his-name. Well, he set to work to show me how I ought to have done it, and by the merest chance in the world, not having anything better to do, I listened to him, for you know Jim is a little prosy and given to talk shop. When I went back into the Schools, — what do you think? — up comes old Fiery Furness, and says he, 'We've lost your second Euclid paper, and must get you to do it again!' And I did, and did it all right too."

"What a fluke!" remarks Jack Kingston, — better known in Denb. Coll. as "Young Cider," on account of his habit of having consignments of that refreshing beverage from his native county of Somerset. "Look here, you chaps, it's half an hour to chapel; have some beer."

No objection being made to this proposal, Harding puts his head out of a window that looks into the back quad and shouts, "Keen!" with all his might. "Sir!" is responded from some remote locality, and presently Keen makes his appearance. A shining, apple-faced man, with a good-tempered smile, is Keen, always civil and obliging, — a very king of "scouts."

"Yes, sir!" says Keen, coming into the room.

"Bring in the pewter and some bottles of Bass. And I say, Keen, if you'll look in the bin under the window, you'll find a bottle of wine, which is your property."

Keen knows what that means, and says, —

"Thankee, sir. I'm sure I'm very glad to hear it, sir. Don't like any of my gentlemen not to get through."

"Well, then, you'd better not ask after Mr. Brotherton," says Tom Friston.

"What, ain't he through, sir? I'm sorry to hear that, — and he have worked hard, too. That was the only thing as troubled me. Now, if he'd worked like Mr. Harding here!" — and there's a roguish twinkle

in Keen's eye as he says this. Whereupon Edward Harding catches up the pewter which the scout has just placed on the table as if with the intention of throwing it at Keen, but changes his mind and takes a pull of beer instead.

"You go and be hanged, Keen!" he says, laughing.

"Thankee, sir," says Keen.

It was a peculiarity of Keen's always to say "Thank you," no matter what you said to him. He probably considered it to be the famous soft answer guaranteed to turn away wrath. Edward Harding used to declare that if he had shouted to Keen and brought him from the farther end of the college only to tell him he was an old fool, Keen would have said, "Thankee, sir!" with the most imperturbable good-nature.

Presently the door opens, and James Harding walks in.

"Well, Ted, all right, I suppose?"

"All right, Jim."

"Congratulate you, old fellow!"

"Well, I've to thank you for it, Jim, to a great extent." And then he repeats the story about the lost paper and the proposition about the angles and the sides. He never seems tired of repeating that story, and is as pleased at his bit of luck as if it were something he had done himself and had a right to be proud of.

The chapel bell is beginning to ring now, and men in boating-costume come hurrying into quad and rush up their respective staircases, it not being considered correct to appear at afternoon chapel in flannels, though I have heard of a nightgown, a comforter, and a pair of trousers being held quite full dress enough for morning chapel.

Edward Harding and his brother are left almost alone now, most of the men going to their rooms to get ready for chapel or dinner. Edward is at the window, evidently looking for somebody. He has not to wait long. A little fellow in boating-costume comes running into college, rushes straight across quad, and bounces into the room.

"All right, Ted?"

"All right, Tom!"

"Hooray!" and Tom Martindale proceeds at once to perform a wild *pas d'exalté*. Tom Martindale is Edward Harding's especial chum. He is a neat, dapper little man, as strong and wiry as a bull-terrier, and full of pluck to the backbone. He has been rowing bow in the Torpid for the last week, none of the freshmen being, as he says, "strong enough for the place."

Tom Martindale is one of those men who

do well everything they undertake. He is not desperately devoted to any particular pursuit, but is good at anything. He has undertaken to row in the boat until they can find or train a man for the place, not because he delights in being "bucketed" to Sandford and back at goodness knows how many strokes a minute, but because it is for the credit of the College. Denb. Coll. has held a high place on the river for several years now, and William Kingstone, the skipper, who is the main cause of the success, attributes it to his having got a crew together to practise early. So Tom Martindale, who is not in training, consents to be a martyr to the College honor, and gets into the boat with seven oarsmen trained to perfection, and allows himself to be called on for "spurts," and "a little more steadiness in the bows," and, in short, to be generally bullied by the coxswain, as if he (Tom Martindale) were only allowed to row by special favor, and ought to be made to feel it.

But, in spite of the rowing, — which you may pronounce as rhyming with "show" or "cow," just as you please, for either will do, the Denbigh coxswain being a stinger, and no mistake, — Tom Martindale was not so much exhausted that he could not execute a masterly double shuffle in honor of Edward Harding's passing Responsions.

"Have a pull of beer, Tom?"

"Not at all," said Martindale, burying his head in the tankard, and emerging two minutes afterwards gasping and almost speechless.

"Edward Harding, you're an unfeeling brute. Your testamur renders you oblivious of the commonest feelings of humanity. How dare you give bottled Bass, or any sort of beer, in this unlimited manner, to the bow in the Torpid?"

"I don't think bow in the Torpid required much pressing."

"Perhaps he did, and perhaps he did n't. But I can tell you one thing. You know Ifley Lasher? Well, about two strokes and a half this side of that coming up, bow in the Denbigh Torpid had a very vivid and penitent recollection of two helps of lobster salad and a long pull of spiced ale, which light repast was partaken of in the rooms, and at the suggestion of Edward Harding, whom the examiners would most assuredly have plucked for conduct so revolting to a well-ordered mind, if bow in the Denbigh Torpid had not kindly concealed the damning fact in his own excruciated bosom."

"Thomas Martindale e Coll. Denb., nothing but the reflection that there is a disparity

in our sizes, combined with the fact that you have parents whom I respect, although I have never seen, and whose gray hairs —" "The governor wears a wig," interjects Tom.

"Irreverent scoffer! whose wigs, then, I should be sorry to bring down in sorrow to this University, in order to be present at the inquest, — nothing but this consideration prevents me from at once and forever knocking your head off!"

"If you do, I'll ask your big brother to punch yours."

At this moment Keen appears with a jug of hot water.

"I've took yours up to your room, Mr. Martindale; and it's a quarter past five, sir."

"All right, Keen; I'll be there in a twinkling."

"Thankee, sir."

"Jim, you'll dine with me, I suppose?" says Edward.

"Well, I've promised Martin of our place to go over some logic with him."

"O, nonsense! I sha'n't pass Smalls again in a hurry, and I may never pass anything else, so you may as well give yourself a holiday this once. Besides, think of 'Chicken Broth' getting ploughed after all his work, and then look on this picture. I'll tell you what, Jim, if you go on reading you'll never take honors, you may depend upon it!"

James accordingly consents to dine with his brother, and Edward gives "a wine" afterwards in honor of the event of his examination. And then Tom Martindale gives a supper, in spite of the remonstrances of the coxswain, who declares Tom won't "pull his own boot-laces" to-morrow.

The evening passes with fun and jollity, and there is no particular harm done, except that a few choice spirits, just before going to bed, are moved to play off a harmless practical joke. Under the window of one of the tutors there was a very large lamp, — one which lit the whole of the "Old Quad," in fact, but which had been extinguished, long before the supper broke up, by the porter. Having ascertained that that functionary was sound asleep, — somebody said there was no doubt about the "sound," for you could hear him snoring for miles, — the choice spirits very quietly got out the porter's ladder, and, setting it against the lamp, climbed up, and with some oil-paints, belonging to Tom Martindale, adorned it by inscribing on one side in very large, solid letters, "GOOD BEDS," and on the other, "BILLIARDS AND POOL," with the usual insignia, the cross cues and billiard-balls.

This adornment was not of a strictly collegiate character, and caused some amusement, as may be imagined, to the morning chapel-goers.

Of course the authorities suspected Tom Martindale and Edward Harding, but they could not bring anything home to them; indeed, Keen, being examined, gave such strong testimony to their incapability of doing anything of the sort, that the Dons hardly knew what to believe.

You will have guessed from this that Tom Martindale and Edward Harding were stanch friends. They were, in fact, almost inseparable. In mischief or out of mischief, at lecture or hall, on road or river, they were always together, like two brothers; indeed, more affectionate and attached than many brothers are. They were well known in the University and the city, by town and gown, and were so seldom seen apart that some wag had christened them the "Siamese Twins."

CHAPTER II.

THE LOAN OF AN UMBRELLA.

"TUMMUS, friend of my soul, put on your four-and-ninepenny beaver, and accompany yours in all sincerity for a walk," said Edward Harding, coming into Tom Martindale's room.

Tom was sitting in an easy-chair, with his dog on his knees. Tom Martindale's dog was a "feature," to use a peculiar but significant form of speech. It was a Blenheim spaniel, with very silky hair and beautiful eyes, and was full of intelligence. At the mention of the word "walk" it pricked up its ears and wagged its tail.

"Well," said its master, "if you and Phyllis both say so, my only chance is to obey. Whither bound, O philosopher?"

"Anywhere you like. I want to go to Ryman's about some pictures —"

"And when you have bowed down in the house of Ryman, what then?"

"Why, I'm game to go where you like."

"On my head and my eyes, O sultan! — only that would be a painful mode of progression. But look here, Ned, seriously: I've got a lazy fit to-day, so if you're for a twenty-miler I sha'n't go."

"O, I don't want to go far, — only just for an appetite!"

"Well, if that's what you want, I know exactly where to look for it, for I saw one on a particular bench in Magdalen Walk."

"You lazy beggar, Tom! I see your little plan. But never mind, — come along!

Here's your hat. I'll brash you. There, now you're splendid!"

"Stop a minute! This philosopher is not going out such a fine day as this without his umbrella."

"Fine day! Why, surely you don't want an umbrella on a fine day?"

"Ted, I've always considered your education neglected, but I did not think you were such a donkey. Have the goodness to observe that umbrella! Every fold of that magnificent machine is as symmetrically arranged as the fluting on a Corinthian column! Observe its tenuity. Now, do you think I should take such a masterpiece out when the weather was not fine? Why, I should have to open it!"

Harding burst into a loud laugh, in which Tom joined, and they descended the stairs, Phyllis following them in high glee, but not venturing to express her delight audibly. It is a rule — and, I think, a bad one — at Oxford, that men should not keep dogs in college. I have a notion that the companionship of a well-bred, intelligent dog would be of great service to some young men, — at all events, if they could appreciate good example. I think it's a very good sign of a youngster if he has a favorite dog.

Tom Martindale was very fond of Phyllis, and she simply worshipped him with all her intelligent nature. Her presence in college was not altogether unknown to the authorities, for she had been seen coming in and out of the gates by the Dons, but they did not say anything, as a rule. To be sure, old Venning, when he got angry with Tom, sometimes had recourse to the anti-canine law as a *dernier ressort*. "You don't know your lecture, Mr. Martindale, — don't know your lecture!" he would say. Tom explained that he had been ill, and had sent in an "sager." "Well, you haven't read up to-day's lecture, you know!" Tom remonstrated that, having been unwell on the previous day, he could not, of course, be expected to have prepared any work. "But you never know your lectures, Mr. Martindale, you know, — you never know your lectures!" Tom objected to generalities, and asked for a particular instance, whereupon Mr. Venning, driven into a figurative corner, wound up with the unanswerable remark, "Well, you keep a dog in college, you know, — you keep a dog in college, — and I'll scone you!" by which he meant that he should fine him.

Tom had trained Phyllis to run in and out of college alone, he himself following at his leisure, and at such a distance that he could not be clearly proved as belonging to the dog. The only indiscretion Phyllis

ever committed during her University career was sitting one fine morning on the window-ledge of Tom's room just as everybody was coming out of chapel; on which occasion she was seen by the Master, who sent the porter to turn her out of college. The porter, however, was so charmed by Tom's affability, his sherry, and a five-shilling piece, that the Master's orders entirely escaped his memory.

Edward, Tom, and Phyllis took the air pleasantly. They went along the High, where Edward transacted his business at Ryman's, then strolled on to Magdalen, and, sitting on a bench overlooking the Chervell, gave themselves up to cigars and meditation.

They did not observe that the sky was gradually darkening, and it was only when the first warning drops of rain came pattering down on the leaves that they were aware of an approaching storm. They at once jumped up and made off, intending to take shelter either in some Magdalen friend's rooms or in the cloisters. The rain came faster and heavier, and they were just breaking into a canter when they came round a corner of the walk upon two young ladies in very charming spring attire, vainly trying to shelter themselves and their dainty bonnets under a very inadequate tree, which was hardly in leaf. Edward snatched Tom's umbrella from his hand in a minute, despite a smothered "Hang it, Tom, don't be a fool!"

"What! and beauty in distress, Tom? Shame on the man who under such circumstances refuses to unfurl his ægis!"

Prit! and the engine was opened. Tom groaned.

"Allow me to offer you this umbrella, ladies."

"O, you're very kind," said one of them, — "but what will you do?"

"Nothing," said Edward with great gravity, "could have induced my friend to open this umbrella but the hope that it might be of use to you; he would n't have done it for me if it had rained tangible cats and actual dogs. Pray, don't disappoint him."

The girls laughed, and accepted his offer. They were both young, both pretty, and they were very good-tempered, and did not give themselves airs. It was plain that they were not what I suppose, for want of any other term, I must call "ladies." They were the daughters of some well-to-do tradesman, Tom thought. The two friends walked with them to the gates, and made themselves as agreeable as they could. As they were about to separate, one of the

girls asked how they were to return the umbrella.

"Does anybody ever return umbrellas?" asked Edward.

"You're very generous with other people's property," said the young lady, smiling; "but how *are* we to return the umbrella?"

"Ah, how?" said Edward, putting on a puzzled air.

Tom had not said much during their brief interview, but he had singled out one of the girls for his special attentions. He now broke silence with a suggestion, —

"I dare say you often come to Magdalen Walk for a stroll, and we shall no doubt meet again; or — or we can appoint a time."

"O, we often come here; papa lives in St. Thomas's, just over the bridge, and this is a favorite walk."

"Well, suppose I and my friend come to-morrow, and see if you happen to be walking there?"

"O, we'll come, if it's only to prove to your sceptical friend that people do return umbrellas."

"I'll believe when I see it," said Edward Harding; "and I can only add, I shall rejoice in the occasion that gives me the opportunity."

All this was very wrong, no doubt, — was n't it, reader mine? But, you see, there really was no harm in it. Young folks will be young, and lads will like the society of lasses. It has always seemed to me that one of the worst features of Oxford life is the want of the one thing which civilizes and refines young men, — the influence of the society of good and pure women. They will — if they are worth anything at all — have some sort of female society, — will make friends of the girls behind the counters or at the tavern-bars. Or they make acquaintances as these two lads have just done, and the acquaintance is carried on in a clandestine manner, which is injurious to both parties. "Think of all the falling in love there would be!" I hear some one say; "think of all the ill-assorted attachments." To which I reply that there would be no more love-making than there is now, and of a healthier sort, not being underhand or surreptitious. And as to the ill-assorted attachments, I can only say that there are worse things that happen than that under the present system. It is unwholesome and unnatural. Where so many young lads are thrown together, — good, bad, and indifferent, — there ought to be the correcting influence of female society. I firmly believe that it would do away with very much that is shameful and sinful in our universities, and

would be exerted just at the right time, while the lads are young and have n't lost all the freshness and innocence of boyhood.

Edward and Tom met their new acquaintances in Magdalen Walk next day, according to arrangement, for the return of the umbrella. And then they met them the next, when there was no umbrella to return, and so on, and so on.

They learned that the object of Tom's special admiration was a visitor to Oxford. Her name was Mary Freshfield, and she was a governess by profession. She had been an old schoolfellow of her friend Emily Prior's, who was the daughter of the butler of St. Benedict's College, and who often had "dear Mary" to stay with her, she told the lads, whenever she was not engaged.

I am afraid I must own that it was a desperate flirtation,—but it was an innocent one. I must say that the two boys were exceedingly daring in the manner in which they carried on what they called "spooning." They actually used to have the audacity to watch papa off to college, and then they would go to the house and spend the evening, with tea and music, until it was time for papa to come home. They were very cosy, pleasant evenings, and I believe they all enjoyed them. I am sure the girls used to listen anxiously for the sound of a musical instrument something like a complicated "musical pear," such as you may buy at fairs, but which Edward dignified by the name of "dulcimer," and on which he used to speak softly, as a signal for admission.

Edward, Tom, Phyllis, and the dulcimer became constant visitors to Mr. Prior's, though without his knowledge. But such audacity was not to go on undiscovered forever.

One evening—whether Mr. Prior was late or the lads were early, I cannot say, or whether some kind neighbors had been taking notes, and were kind enough to tell the good gentleman—but he was still at home when the pair arrived with the dulcimer and began a soft serenade. Finding that music had no charms, Tom pronounced that the two young ladies were napping, so he threw a small pebble at the window, whereupon one pounced Mr. Prior, and Tom, Edward, dulcimer, and Phyllis had to vanish. Luckily Mr. Prior had to turn back for his hat before he could go in pursuit; so the lads jumped a hedge, took across country, turned back, and worked round to the house again. Mary and Emily were at the door in a state of terrible alarm, and the latter announced that "papa" had gone in pursuit of the offenders.

"O well, then, he's quite safe now, so we'll just step in and rest after our exertions; poor Phyllis is not in good condition, and has suffered considerably from the burst," said Tom.

"O, but you must not come in to-night! Papa might come back!"

"Not a bit of it," said Edward. "He must be in college by this time,—fancy the whole of St. Benedict's kept waiting for its beer because Mr. Prior has n't got an ear for music, and can't appreciate the dulcimer." And he was going to give a proof of the harmonious capabilities of that instrument, but was checked by Tom, who would not suffer the performance, and asked Mary Freshfield to give them a little music, so that his friend might learn what music was.

So Mary sat down at the piano, and Emily made tea, and the fright was quite forgotten in a short time. Emily Prior was a few years older than Mary Freshfield, and she had lived at Oxford from a child, so that she was a little more knowing than her friend. She had heard of instances of Oxford girls making very good matches out of flirtations with young fellows at college, and she did not see why she should not be among the lucky ones. She laid herself out at once to catch Edward, and as he was young and inexperienced she had not much difficulty in it. They were "engaged" before they had known each other a week, though Edward did not tell Tom.

Tom and Mary Freshfield did not make fierce love, but they bantered one another and flirted without any pretence of seriousness. But Mary's bright eyes and merry laugh and her saucy curls made a deeper impression on Tom than he chose to admit even to himself.

As for Mary, after Tom was gone of an evening there used to come a very grave and sad look into her eyes. I think she knew what she had done. She had for the fun and frolic of the thing been playing with Cupid's darts, and had scratched her finger. It was a slight scratch, but the deed was done. She might laugh, and joke, and tease Tom as much as she pleased, but when she was alone her thoughts of him were very tender, and she used to sigh, which, I take it, is a sign that she was suffering the pleasant pain of a first love.

Why is it that we will deceive ourselves and one another in this way? Here were Edward and Emily making all sorts of solemn protestations of affection and regard,—and they did not care about one another a bit. And here were Tom and Mary, who really loved one another, trifling with their

best feelings and jesting about a true passion. Cross-purposes is one of the most popular games in the world.

One would have thought that their narrow escape from Mr. Prior would have made our two friends cautious for the future. Not a bit of it! At their usual hour, having finished their sherry, they lit their cigars and sauntered off along the High. How it was that they never were caught by the proctor, I won't pretend to say, but for weeks they had taken that same walk to Mr. Prior's, cigar in mouth, and night after night they had returned to college, making night lovely with snatches of melody on the dulcimer, or songs, and on no occasion had the appearance of "the policeman in velvet sleeves" interfered with this display of youth and high spirits.

On this memorable night, as usual, they arrived, unquestioned, at Mr. Prior's. But that worthy, warned by the events of the previous night, had handed over the key of the buttery and his authority to the under-butler, and had determined to stop at home for the evening. You may imagine that the two girls were in a pretty state of mind. They tried to send out the servant, who held a retaining-fee from the two lads, to warn them, but Mr. Prior was quite equal to the occasion, and forbade her leaving the house.

A melancholy squeak of the dulcimer anon told of the arrival of the friends. Mr. Prior immediately put on his hat, and, very much to their astonishment, walked out, prepared for a pursuit. Tom and Edward felt it would be undignified to run, so they sauntered along easily, as if bent on taking a stroll. But Mr. Prior was not to be shaken off so easily. He took a stroll too. And when Tom in a stage whisper suggested that they had taken a sufficient constitutional, and might as well turn back, Mr. Prior turned back too. The lads had the advantage of him in coolness, though, for when, as they passed him, he began to address them, Tom told him that he had not had the honor of being introduced to him, and was not in the habit of making casual acquaintances, — a speech which, as you may suppose, did not improve his temper. He tried to set the policeman on Mactalen Bridge on their track, thinking they might try to run away, but that functionary was far too well acquainted with the unwelcome of the lads to enter into his views. So Mr. Prior had nothing to do but to amble and follow.

Tom and Edward were rather undecided as to the right course to pursue. To bolt was, of course, the first idea that presented it-

self, but was immediately rejected. "If they must come to sorrow," said Tom, "let them do so in the full possession of their senses and their breath." The next notion was to knock in at another college to see a friend, but that they felt was dangerous. Prior was well known, no doubt, to porters and scouts universally, and they would aid him to run them down. So they marched on like Spartans, with Phyllis trotting quietly at their heels, until in the distance they saw a proctor, with Brown the marshal, and a few "bull-dogs" in attendance, coming towards them.

"What now, Tom?" said Ted.

"Leave it to me, and do as I do."

When they met the proctor, Tom stopped and raised his cap, Edward copying him. The proctor looked a little surprised, and stopped too.

"There's a person," said Tom, quietly and respectfully, "who is following us with the apparent idea that he has some complaint against us. Would you be good enough to investigate the question?"

Mr. Prior had by this time come up, and laid his grievance before the proctor.

"O, this is Mr. Prior, sir!" said the officious marshal, "butler of St. Benedict's, — most respectable person, sir."

The proctor looked at our two friends.

"These are Mr. Martindale and Mr. Harding, of Denbigh, sir," added the marshal; and Tom and Edward could not help feeling that he was a great being, for they had neither of them come in his way before, and he must have known their names by instinct.

"You must call on me to-morrow at ten, gentlemen," said the proctor; and, touching his cap, hurried on, followed by the marshal and his retainers, slouching and slinking after him like so many footsore curs.

How any gentleman and clergyman of the Church of England can undertake the proctorship is to me a thing impossible to explain. It must be a most degrading duty. To say nothing of the low neighborhoods he has to scour, and the undignified work he has to do, it must be a really fatiguing task to perambulate the city at all hours of the day and night. And then to think of a reverend gentleman running as hard as he can after some silly boy who shows him a clean pair of heels after some knavish trick! It is too absurd.

Tom and Edward, after parting with the proctor, went straight to college, where they talked the matter over calmly, to the accompaniment of a pipe, and went to bed early, in order to be up in time for the interview next day.

CHAPTER III.

A PEEP AT A PROCTOR AND A PLUNGE FROM A PUNT.

THE careful Keen had a nice cosy breakfast ready in Tom Martindale's rooms at half past eight, and he managed to get the two friends up in time to take it comfortably, and have a quarter of an hour to spare for a pipe after it. This was a wise precaution of Keen's, for the lads—it is no use to conceal the fact—had a wholesome awe of the "policeman in velvet sleeves," and required some fortifying for the interview.

The whole story of the escapade was laid before Keen by Edward Harding, and Keen, after animadverting on the conduct of old Prior in rather severe terms, pronounced that the proctor would only "gate" them,—that is, confine them to college after nine o'clock. It was not a severe punishment to expect, but it was an irksome one.

At a quarter to ten, as Tom was just thinking of lighting another pipe, Keen made his appearance.

"Time to be going, sir."

"O, bother!" said Tom, fiercely.

"Thank you, sir," said the imperturbable Keen.

But he did not leave the room. He got the caps and gowns ready, and went into the sort of butler's pantry attached to the room, and known at the University as "the scout's hole." He made it evident that he was going to see the pair off, so there was nothing for it but for them to don their academicals and start.

"Good morning, sir. Good morning, Mr. Martindale. Wish you well through it, gentlemen."

So off went the pair up St. Ald's, and along the High and into Radcliffe Square,—going back, in short, along the route which was taken by the testamur we tracked in the first chapter.

When they got near Brasenose gates, they began to feel just a thought nervous and uncomfortable.

"Tom Martindale, don't be a donkey," said that worthy to himself aloud, but with a glance at Harding as if to include him in the exhortation.

"You've never been to the proctor before, have you, Tom?" asked Harding.

"Well, no, or else I suppose I should not be alive to tell the tale, to judge from your frightened face, Ted!"

"O yes! Perhaps you're not feeling queer yourself. But here we are!"

So the two turned in at Brasenose gate, the quaint and nasally disproportioned lit-

tle gilt head on which seemed to Tom to wink wickedly as he passed the wicket.

"Where are the actor proctor's rooms?" they asked of the porter, a majestic being, one of the greatest of his race in days when Banting was unknown.

The giant—he was a giant literally, not in altitude—directed them. As he did so, Harding feared he caught sight of old Prior in the porter's lodge, and he told Tom so as they entered the quadrangle in the centre of which stands the celebrated group that Tradition, in uncertainty as to whether it represents Samson and a Philistine, or Cain and Abel, has strangely chosen to call "Samson and Abel."

"Tom, there's old Prior in the lodge."

"Shall we go and punch his head?"

"Well, perhaps we had better see the proctor first!"

"Here's No. 5 staircase,—first flight, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Then here goes!" and Tom led the way to the proctor's rooms. He knocked at the door, and was told to enter. He did so, followed by Harding. The room was very dark, which was not unpleasant under the circumstances. The walls were painted, like many of the rooms in Brasenose, and there were only two smallish windows with heavy stone frames which kept out the light.

A formal "Good morning" on both sides opened the proceedings, and then the proctor, with a politeness not usually shown by proctors to undergraduates, told the two to take seats,—an invitation they were not sorry to avail themselves of, for, like all young Englishmen, they were almost defenceless when on their legs,—that is, in a verbal contest, of course. The proctor looked at them, and then, referring to a slip of paper on the table, said,—

"Mr. Martindale"—Tom bowed—"and Mr. Harding!"—Edward made a slight inclination. The proctor cleared his throat and began rather nervously, "Gentlemen, I have had Mr. Prior here this morning,"—the two exchanged glances; yes, they would punch his head!—"and he complains to me of a system of annoyance you have been pursuing towards his daughter and a young lady who is staying at his house. He says that you follow them about when they are walking, and as they return from church."

This was rather startling news for our friends. It seems old Prior had confounded them with some other University men who had done this, and the confusion stood the pair in good stead.

"I can assure you, sir," said Tom Martindale, with emphasis, "that we have never followed the ladies about in the walks or from church. There must be some mistake." And he looked at Harding.

"There is not the slightest foundation for such a statement, sir," said Harding, taking the hint. He saw the proctor was a little taken aback by their evident earnestness, and he added, "We were under the impression that the person was not quite sober last night, but this mistake explains his excitement."

"It does not explain your presence at his house last night. You must remember this is not the first time he observed you loitering about there."

"We frequently stroll in that direction for a walk after dinner," said Tom.

"That is just what Mr. Prior complains of. You are recognized, I must tell you, by your having a small white dog with you. Is not that so?"

They did not answer.

"Is it a part of your after-dinner constitutional, gentlemen, to play on some musical instrument, and to throw pebbles at people's windows?"

There was no denying those facts. Harding could hardly repress a smile when he thought of the dulcimer.

"Well, gentlemen," said the proctor, after a pause, "I see you do not deny the latter part of the charge as you did the former."

"We did n't follow the girls about!" blurted out Harding.

"Ah! I see!" said the proctor, smiling. "Possibly there was no persecution in the case. I suppose that the young ladies, in short, were as much to blame as yourselves. Is that the defence?"

But Tom and Edward were much too gallant gentlemen to shelter themselves behind that excuse, so they held their tongues, and left the proctor to draw his own conclusions.

After a short pause that dignitary addressed them in the following words:—

"Well, you must promise me, gentlemen, not to repeat this. Will you give me your words not to go to Mr. Prior's house again, or interfere with his household?"

The pair consented, — of course with the mental reservation that Mr. Prior's "household" meant only those who were in the house, and did not extend to those who happened to be out for a walk.

"I need hardly tell you, gentlemen, that any breach of this promise will be severely punished. As I understand from the marshal that this is your first offence, and as it

is rather in the nature of an indiscretion than a crime, I shall say no more to you. Good morning, gentlemen."

"Thank you, sir; good morning," said the pair, and away they went, so delighted at having got off so easily that they forgot all about the "punching of Prior's head," which they had predetermined.

As they turned out of Brasenose they met James Harding.

"Who are these," cried he, "'so withered and so wild in their attire?' Where have you been?"

"Why, you see, Jim," said his brother, "the senior proctor, having heard a great deal about the Siamese Twins, was anxious to see them, so he asked us up to breakfast —"

"The fact is, Harding," broke in Tom Martindale, "Samson and Abel are about to vacate on a retiring pension, and he wanted to know if we would take the post, — I should say pedestal."

"I suppose, if the truth were told, you two fellows have been getting into a scrape, eh?"

"I say, Tom, is n't he intelligent?" said Edward, appealing gravely to his companion.

"Intelligent, young man, is not the word," answered Martindale with solemnity. "What's the adjective from *Oedipus*?"

looking at James Harding.

"Can't say."

"Poor beggar!" said Tom in a stage whisper to Edward, "reading for honors, and does n't know that *Oedipodes* is the patronymic of the word in question: he's a safe gulf!" by which he meant that instead of taking honors Harding would only obtain a pass. Then he continued aloud, "He's *Oedipodal*, — that's what he is."

"It does not want an *Oedipus* to guess what has happened to two young persons who come out of the senior proctor's college in cap and gown at this time of the morning, and look as white as their shirt-collars," said James Harding.

Thereupon Tom Martindale assumes an air of great mystery, — looks round suspiciously, — creeps on tiptoe, after the manner of stage villains, to Brasenose gate, — rejoins his companions in a stealthy manner, — looks round once more with a searching gaze, shading his eyes with his hand, — and finally whispers hoarsely into James Harding's ear, —

"Right you are!"

"Nothing serious, I hope?"

"Well, no; only a lecture."

"What had you been doing?"

"Oh! 'infandum, regina, jubes renovare

lorem.' As you're in for honors, you of course don't know the translation of that, which is, — I quote Pope's version, — 'pity a sorrows of a poor old man,' whose narrative is a great deal too long, as the monsigner said when he bit his friend's tail off — "Look here, Tom, we shall be too late for the dean's Georgic lecture if we stop any longer," said Edward. "Come down and lunch or dine with me, Jim, and you shall hear all about it."

"Come and dine with him, that's a good hap, because I'm going to dine at University with an uncle of mine who is a fellow, and this tender blossom will be lonely without its Martindale."

"Very well, Ted, I'll be down to dinner; but don't ask any fellows to wine, because I want to have a talk with you. I had a letter from the trustees to-day that I want to discuss with you. Good by for the present."

The Hardings had been left orphans at an early age, and had been educated by trustees, with whom James had got on fairly enough, but between whom and Edward a perpetual warfare was going on with regard to money matters.

"Talking of letters," said Tom Martindale, as he and Edward parted from James Harding, "I've had a letter from the governor, and he says we're likely to go to war with Russia."

"By Jove, you don't say so! How I wish I had gone into the army, as I wanted to do, but those confounded trustees would n't let me. They said it would be too expensive, and swallow up all the funds. I wonder what they'll say when my ticks go in, eh?"

"Ted, you have lately got into a bad way of moralizing about your debts, which is a sign of a failing intellect. Thinking about them won't pay them, and it makes you dull company, so prithee abjure — abjure!"

"That's fine philosophy for you, Tom, with a governor who's an Assistant Under-Secretary, and who, being accustomed, by a long career under government, to lavish expenditure, will not take particular notice of your little accounts. If you had a partner in a bank and a crusty old city merchant for trustees, you would not regard your ticks with such equanimity."

"My dear Ted, you never will be a philosopher, in spite of my example and the dean's logic lecture. You appear to forget that one of the maxims of Solomon — or somebody or other — is, 'Always put off till to-morrow what you don't want to do to-day.' If you don't act up to that, you will

bring disgrace upon yourself and misery upon your friends, and never marry and live happily ever afterwards.

"I wish I had your good spirits, Tom. Apropos of marriage, what about Mary and Emily? How can we manage to see them without going to the house? It won't do to write."

"Calm yourself, my child; you shall behold the object of your young affections this afternoon."

"Hullo! is Tom Martindale among the magicians?"

"No; but he has his wits about him. It appears to me that the girls will be just as anxious to hear about us as we are to hear about them. Under the circumstances, they will bethink them where they are most likely to meet us, and they will at once decide —"

"On Magdalen walks, of course! By Jove! Tom, you are really a sharp fellow! I should never have thought of that."

"Be silent, flatterer! What I propose is to take a punt and go up the Cherwell, in case old Prior or the proctor should think of watching us. In that case, our going boating will throw them off the scent. But, I say, it's just on the stroke of eleven! We must double down St. Ald's, or we shall be late, and hurt the dean's feelings."

In the afternoon, as soon as lunch was over, Tom and Edward made their way to the river.

"Where's that light punt of yours, Harvey?" said Tom to one of the watermen.

"It's lying t' other side of Bosson's barge, sir. Just jump in, and I'll put you into her. She won a match for Mr. Sargerson of Balliol yesterday, sir. There ain't a better punt on the river!"

"She is a good one, Harvey; but she is a little wild to steer."

"Not if you can punt, sir, she ain't."

"Come, I'll punt you any day, Harvey, if you'll give me a fair start."

"Lor' bless you, sir, I would n't rob you! But you can punt, you can; I was only a saying so yesterday. Are you going down to see the fours this afternoon?"

"No; I did not know there was a race on."

"O, and it will be a good one, too, sir. I see one four a practising yesterday; it was real beautiful. They had always one oar out of the four in the water, and the coxswain kep' up a fountain with the rudder quite splendid."

They both laughed at this description of the boat, and having by this time reached the punt, stepped into it and unmoored it. Tom Martindale deposited himself and Phyl-

lis in the stern on the cushions, and Edward assumed the punt-hole.

I think there is no lovelier stream in all England than the dear old Cherwell. It was just the beginning of summer, and the trees were all in fresh green leaf in Christ Church Meadows, and the Botanical Gardens were looking neat and bright as our friends pushed over the shallows and passed on to Magdalen Bridge, through the arches of which they could see the trees in the Walk bending full-foliaged boughs down till they dipped in the stream.

Many a drowsy pleasant afternoon had Tom and Edward spent in the punt moored under those drooping branches, with a bottle of claret hung over her side in the cool water, and with some favorite book of poetry or a good novel. There was one spot especially pleasant, where the may was in fuller bloom than elsewhere, and the shade was deeper. Here they moored, and, landing, went up to the Walk and reconnoitred.

As they had conjectured, Mary and Emily were there. They soon spied the lads, and came towards them. They were in a terrible state of fright about the events of the previous evening; but Tom told the story with so much humor, and the termination was so harmless, that they soon dismissed their fears. Arrangements were made for carrying on a correspondence, and plans laid for future meetings, and a regular code of signals was established. The girls, however, did not dare stay long, for Mr. Prior had made them say where they were going before they left the house, and they had told a fib, and said they were going to see a friend who lived in Holywell, so that they must hurry on there at once.

When they were gone, the lads jumped into the punt again.

"What's to be done now, Tom?"

"Let's stop here."

"O, hang it!—without any claret or a book? Impossible!"

"Well, then, since you are so confoundedly proud of your punting, suppose we go and see the fours Harvey was talking about?"

"I'll punt down if you'll punt up."

"Edward Harding, I feel it my duty to discourage at once any symptoms of a mercantile and commercial nature. You ought to know better, with the example of your two trustees before you. Punt, and parley not."

Edward Harding was a good punter, and they were speedily pushing along by the Berkshire shore towards the Gut. Just as they had passed through that purgatory of inexperienced steersmen, the clouds, which

had been gathering overhead unobtrusively began to discharge their contents in deliberate drops.

"Shove along, Ted. Make for the house-boat there." There was a barge moored along-shore a little farther on. "We can take shelter there. It's only a shower."

Harding went alongside, and they moored the punt to the barge and jumped in. They found Harvey and another waterman inside.

"Just in time, Mr. Martindale. We're going to have a soaker. I hope they'll stop them fours till it's over, or we shan't see much of the fun."

"It can't last long," said Tom, "they're such whacking big drops"; for by this time the rain was beating down in torrents, pattering against the window and on the roof of the boat-house, and making the river him again as it lashed its surface.

Tom and Edward lit a cigar each, and handed one to Harvey, who took it with delight and gratitude.

Before long the rain died away a bit. The air brightened, the storm had passed, and it was only the tail of the shower now.

"Hark!" said Harvey. "Here they come!"

They listened. There was a noise of distant shouting, and presently the steady roll of the oars in the rowlocks. They went outside and looked down the river. Two four-oared boats were coming up at full swing, a little crowd of men running along the bank and cheering.

The first boat had not a great lead, which must have been owing to a bad start, for the crew were pulling well together and steadily, whereas the second boat was "all wild and anywhere," as Tom described it.

All at once, as the boats were about a hundred yards from the barge, there was a sudden cry, and a stop in the running crowd, and then those in the barge saw that the second boat had capsized, and all the crew were in the water.

Harvey and the other waterman sprang into their punt in a minute, and pushed off. Tom snatched up Phyllis, and sprang into his punt, followed by Edward.

"Go ahead, Ted, for dear life!" said Tom, standing up in the punt and rapidly divesting himself of his jacket and waistcoat and boots. Edward punted with all his strength. The light craft shot ahead of the heavier one in which Harvey was, and Tom could not help shouting to him, "Lor' bless you, I would n't rob you of your money." But Harvey only shook his head, and punted away with all vigor.

As soon as the stroke of the leading boat saw the accident that had happened to the

sond, he cried out, "Hold her all!" And Jerry oar was plunged into the water, but his way on her was too strong to be checked easily.

"Back her down! Back her down! Back!" cried the captain.

But by the time all this was done, Edward and Tom were on the scene. The rowd on the bank did little or nothing. A few ran off to fetch the life-preserver which hung on a post a little way off; but they tumbled over one another, and all pulled at the belt different ways. Others got into the river up to their waists, which was courageous, but useless, for they could not swim, and the drowning men were out in the middle of the stream.

All this happened in far less time than it takes to write it. The coxswain of the capsized boat was able to swim ashore. The four oarsmen, either ignorant of the art of swimming, or out of breath with their exertions, were in imminent danger of drowning.

As soon as the punt neared the scene of the upset, Tom jumped over, and struck out towards the nearest man. He was followed, I must tell you, by Phyllis, whose affection for her master overcame her dislike of water. Edward had to pull her into the punt again, and hold her. This prevented him from backing up Tom as much as he might otherwise have done, for you can't punt well in deep water with one hand. Luckily, however, the four had backed up in time for Tom to put the first man he came up with to hang on by the side of the boat. Then he struck out to the next, and brought him alongside, not without some difficulty, for he was nearly gone, and it was difficult work to get hold of him safely. When he had brought him alongside of the four, Tom looked for the third man, caught him as he rose for the third time, and made towards the boat with him. As he did so he glanced round for the fourth, but he had been thrown the life-belt by this time, and was being pulled ashore. Tom was not sorry for this, for he was a little tired, and his wet clothes were heavy. As it happened, however, he had brought both the men he had picked up to the same side of the four, and she was a little out of trim in consequence. If he had caught hold too, she must have capsized. But Tom was a good swimmer; so he quietly dived under the boat, and, coming up on the other side, hung on by the side, and restored the equilibrium.

"Now paddle ashore quietly, please," said Tom, a little out of breath, but quite collected.

When he got ashore you may be sure he was loudly cheered, and he was heartily thanked by the men he had preserved. The popularity made him a little uncomfortable. He only shook himself like a Newfoundland dog, shouted to Edward to "put Lolo ashore and punt back to Oxford," and then, accompanied by Phyllis, he set off at a smart trot up the bank. The capsized crew went to Ilfley, as being nearer than Oxford, and Tom was loudly advised to do the same, but he said he had to go out to dinner, and it would make him late.

"Well, Tom," said Edward, when he reached college, and found his friend taking a glass of "brandy-and-water, hot, and one cigar," as he described it, "you are the coolest card I know. You've just saved three chaps' lives and earned the Humane Society's medal, and you come back quietly and sit down as if nothing had happened. I'll bet you have not even told Keen."

"I told Keen that you had upset me, and that I had given you such a licking for it that you had been conveyed to the hospital. But what's the good of making a fuss? I just happen to know how to swim, and did nothing that anybody could not have done."

"You've saved three fellows' lives —"

"And you saved Lolo's, for she would certainly have been drowned unnoticed if you had not caught her up. Phyllis, my dear, at your time of life you ought to know better than to fancy you could swim ashore with a damp undergraduate in your teeth, because you're not big enough."

And Tom roared at his own notion, Phyllis looking at him blandly, and wagging her tail lazily, as much as to say, "Go on, I'm used to your nonsense."

At this moment Keen entered the room.

"Glad to see you out of hospital so soon, sir," said he, grinning. "No bones broke, I hope?"

"Keen, you're a donkey," said Edward.

"Thank you, sir," said Keen, quite civilly, and by instinct.

"I did not upset him at all. There was a boat capsized just beyond the Gut, and Mr. Martindale jumped over and saved three lives, Keen. What do you think of that?"

"You don't say so, sir? Now that's noble, that is. Mr. Martindale, sir, you'll excuse my saying as it's noble, sir."

"I sha'n't excuse anything of the sort, Keen," answered Tom, blushing like a girl. "And if you go on in this way I declare I won't jump in after you, if ever I see you in the water."

"Thank you, sir."

"Quite welcome, Keen, — and I'll keep my word. And now just take me up some hot water, for I must go to dress. And I say, Ted, as you won't have me to look after you, just you be on your guard, and don't let that wild brother of yours lead you into mischief. Good by, old chap, I'll look in when I come back."

CHAPTER IV.

OXFORD TICKS.

"I SAY, Jim," said Edward, as he and his brother came out of hall after dinner, "I might as well ask one or two fellows in to wine."

"No, don't!" was the answer. "It's no good trying to cut this business, Ted. Sooner or later it must be done, and the sooner the better."

"Very well," yielded Edward, with a sigh, but he hoped devoutly that some one would drop in unasked. There were several men in college who seldom or never gave any entertainments themselves, but who dropped in uninvited on other men in the most genial manner. There were Lipsall, and Weigcombe, and Jones, who was called "Jejune," three men that took special delight in calling on their friends, and never being at home themselves. Edward would have been glad to see any one of them on this occasion, but they stayed away when they were wanted.

Keen brought out the dessert and wine, and made the brothers comfortable, and then went out and "sported the oak" by James's directions.

Edward filled his brother's glass, and then his own, which he emptied nervously at one gulp, and then refilled.

"Well, Jim, what's the matter with the governors? I hope old Wisby's bank has broken, not to mention his neck, and that Slowman has been plucked for the mayoralty."

"Don't be naughty, Ted, or I shall have to give you a lesson in singletick," said his brother, good-naturedly.

James Harding was a very kindly fellow, and he was placed in a difficult position, being several years Edward's senior, and held by the trustees to be in some way responsible for Edward's behavior, as if he stood *in loco parentis*. Some brothers might have swayed a father's authority over Edward, but James was not the sort of man. He was too quiet and modest. I think Edward would have played the part with far greater success.

"Before we go into business, though, Ted, just tell me what scrape you were in with the proctor."

With some hesitation and a little reticence, especially as to his position towards Emily Prior, Edward recounted to his brother the history of the acquaintance and its result. James shook his head.

"My dear Ted, do mind what you are doing. I know I have a gentleman for a brother, but this is dangerous work. Suppose this flirtation should end seriously for the girl! It is very possible. Girls in that position are easily fascinated by a man who has the taste and education of a gentleman, especially if he is not exactly ugly, — and you are not quite that, Ted. Then, again, these Oxford girls are some of them old hands at this sort of thing, and know how to catch a husband. You may be hooked without thinking. Do mind what you're after."

"Well, Jim, I don't say it is exactly a flirtation. She is a very charming girl, and if you knew her I am sure you would like her. She's very superior to her station in life."

"Pooh! nonsense, Ted! You don't mean to tell me you are seriously smitten? How romantic! Don't you find the St. Benedict's ale almost like nectar because her father draws it? But there, don't look savage, Ted. I could n't help it. The notion was so funny."

He saw that Edward was a little nettled at his joking, and he had the good sense to feel that opposition would only make matters worse. He had been at the University long enough to know that calf-love, like the measles, breaks out there at times, and passes off without injuring the constitution.

"Come, I won't tease you any more, Ted; so just give me a weed, and let's begin business."

Edward produced his cigars, and each lit one, and they sat smoking in silence for some minutes. At last James Harding commenced the conversation.

"You know, Ted, I never pry into your affairs of my own free will, — in fact, I have never done it at all yet. But Mr. Wisby has written me one of his business notes, saying that you have told him that you owe a considerable sum of money in Oxford, and that you wish it paid."

"Why did n't he write to me, and send me the money, instead of bothering you? I hate the whole business, and don't want to have any correspondence or bother about it. If they won't pay the money, they need n't. I'll take my name off and enlist."

"You'd get heartily sick of that, Ted, in a very short time. One of our fellows did it, but he was pretty glad to be bought off and sent back to finish his time at Skimmery. It was terribly hard work and bad pay, — but the sort of men he had to associate with very soon sickened him of soldiering."

"O, well, there are lots of other things a fellow can do. I won't be pestered and badgered about the ticks. It's my own money, at any rate."

"My dear Ted, I'm afraid you are something like I was when I came up, — you know nothing about money or the value of it. I remember, when they sent me up to matriculate with about thirty or forty pounds in my pocket, I had never seen so much money in all my life before, and thought I could never get through it; but I did very soon, and had a great many bills to pay at the end of my first year, for I was awfully extravagant."

"Yes, I have had all that preached to me by Wisby and Slowman; but then, you see, Jim, your extravagance took one line, — books and pictures, — while mine has been a sort of universal genius. I've got about six or eight hundred pounds' worth of ticks, and I've got nothing to show for it."

"You're buying experience very dear, my boy," said James, gravely; "I'm afraid you're given to promiscuous hospitality. Rooms on the ground-floor are very dangerous for a fellow who's generous and open-handed. You've always a glass of wine or a bottle of beer and a cigar for any fellow that drops in, and every one drops in on the ground-floor. If there's only a flight of twenty stairs, men care less to run the chance of your being out or the oak being sported."

"Well, I do have a lot of fellows dropping in, as you say. But one can't help being popular."

"Popular, Ted! It's your wine that's popular. It's your cigars that are favorites. If you have to dock your expenditure, — and you'll have to do it, Ted, too, and to some tune, — you'll soon find your popularity on the wane."

"You're an old cynic, Jim; much learning doth make you morose. I'm sure chaps would do anything for me."

"Wait and see. I know a little more of University friendship than you do. I have seen Friendship fly out of the window when Economy came in at the door. The child is father to the man, Ted, and though it is not nice, it is true that the boys here at the University are every bit as worldly and

selfish very often as their seniors, engaged in the bustle of life."

"Don't moralize, Jim, there's a dear," says Edward; and he laughs, but does not feel easy. "Would you like to write that down? It might be useful for a sermon."

His brother shakes his fist at him, smiling kindly.

"Ted, you're incorrigible. You must hear reason."

"I hate lectures of any sort, Jim, — ask the Dona. So do deal gently with me."

"Well, perhaps the kindest way to get out of this position, Ted, is to tell you the whole at once, without any further preamble. The trustees wish to know the full extent of your liabilities. They say they cannot get you to the point in writing, and want me to ask you. You need not tell me if you don't like, for I have no right in the world to ask you. But I think, if you choose to tell me, I can advise you for the best. I know a good deal about these difficulties, for I have helped two of our men through such scrapes with the home authorities. But do just as you like, Ted, dear, because I sha'n't mind if you say no, because I've no right —"

"Yes, you have a right, Jim; every right. You have been a thundering good brother to me, a deal better than I deserve, and I've long wanted to talk it over with you. Only somehow one hates to think it over by one's self, much more to talk about it."

"It's the only way to get out of the mess, my boy."

"I know I've been a fool, Jim, and gone ahead much too fast. But it is n't altogether my fault. The temptations are very strong."

"I know them, my boy. The first day I set foot in Oxford, after I had passed my matriculation examination, and was going before the Vice-Chancellor, I went to a shop in the High to buy a cap. The tailor positively would n't let me pay for it, until I threatened to leave the shop, and not take it. I only wish I had always acted with the same determination."

"O, it's so jolly to have anything in the world you have a fancy for, only just by saying 'Send it in,' and giving your name and college."

"Well, when I'm Vice-Chancellor, Ted, I'll reform all that. I'll discommons any tradesman who lets a bill run beyond a term. 'Square up every vac, or no more goods'; that should be the motto."

"Well, when you're Vice-Chancellor, Jim, I'll send my son to Oxford; but not before, unless I am found to be heir-apparent to Golconda, or the nearest of kin to

CHAPTER V.

BREAKFAST-TABLE TALK.

Fortunatus, with the immediate reversion of the magic purse."

"That won't be just yet, Ted; and I'm afraid you won't find your creditors willing to wait until then. So, pending Golconda and the magic purse, what will cover your debts here?"

Edward mused a bit. He had made out "a full and complete" list a week ago, but since then had discovered that it fell a great deal short of fulness and completeness, for he had remembered half a dozen more bills than it contained, — bills which, though individually small, somehow led to the carrying of a big figure into the second column of the additional sum.

"Well, Jim, at a rough guess, I should say six or seven hundred; or eight at the outside."

"Or nine or ten, eh? I know how deceptive such calculations are. On such a large sum I'm afraid two hundred is about a fair shot at the amount you have underestimated."

"By Jove! I hope not, Jim, or I shall have to take my name off the books, for that's about all I have in the world now. If it would only leave me a margin of two or three hundred pounds, that would just keep me here until I took up my degree. I'd work awfully hard, Jim, that I would, to make up for lost time."

"Well, we must see. Have you got a list of your bills? If so, we'll go over them, and see what they come to."

Edward fetched out his list, and the brothers went over it carefully. Then James took a mental tour about Oxford, up one street and down another, mentioning the shops in each street, and asking his brother if he had bills at them. By this method of exhaustion they soon added to the number of creditors, and by the time the last street and the last shop were named, the figures were a little over rather than under the amount that James Harding had set down as the probable limit.

"Now, Ted, will you leave this matter entirely in my hands? I can settle it with the trustees more quickly and with less row than you."

His brother was very grateful for the offer, and was equally profuse in protestations as to what he would do, and how steady he would be, and how determined he was to have no more bills.

James Harding scarcely dared to hope that these good resolutions would be stronger than those of many a young fellow whom he had heard registering the same vows, and seen immediately afterwards breaking them.

Nor long after Edward and James Harding had settled about the debts, Tom Martindale came in. He was in high spirits. His uncle had heard from good authority that war with Russia was imminent, and he had proposed to Tom to get him a commission if he liked. There was nothing that could have delighted Tom more. His father had sent him to the University with a view to his going to the bar, but Tom's was not a legal mind, and, indeed, not that of a student of any sort. He hated work, and was in every way a lazy man, though you would hardly have thought so if you had seen him playing at cricket, or rowing, or anything of that sort. But the truth was, he had a naturally idle disposition; in short, was exactly cut out for a soldier, whether in time of peace or time of war. His uncle was a shrewd old fellow, and knew more of the world than most Dons at Oxford do. How should they, poor high-and-dry hulks, freighted down with ancient languages and logic, and debarred from the ordinary and the best relations of life, — monks of learning, hermits of erudition, with a dead language for a *caput mortuum*, and wearing the hair shirt of enforced and irksome bachelorhood?

Tom's uncle had been sent to Oxford against his wishes, and had become a fellow to escape what he thought a greater evil, — the family living. He saw what Tom was suited for, and now that the opportunity came, was determined to carry the point and get his nephew into the army.

Tom was in high glee, and the rest of the evening passed very merrily. Edward felt relieved of an incubus by his brother's undertaking to arrange for the settlement of his debts. So these two rattled on, and laughed and joked, and played small, harmless practical jokes off on one another, little heeding James Harding, who was rather quiet and reserved, and did not in his turn heed them very much, but sat gazing into the fire and smoking contemplatively. By Tom-toll he left for his own college, and Edward and Martindale went to a supper in college, where the latter was received with immense applause for his courageous conduct in saving the crew of the capsized boat, and became the hero of the evening, being conveyed to his own rooms at the close of the proceedings in a chair carried on the shoulders of a noisy and not too steady crowd.

"Popularity, Ted," he remarked, when he was safely in his own rooms and the noisy

crowd had at last dispersed, making the quiet college ring with all sorts of whoops and cries, — "popularity, Ted, may be charming, but it is risky. Because fellows think I saved a life or so this morning, I don't see why they should want to break my neck to-night; they could n't have done more if I'd committed a murder. They nearly dropped me twenty times, and finished up by almost braining me against the top of the doorway of my own staircase."

"You're an ungrateful wretch," said Ted, "so good night!"

"Good night, old boy."

So these two lads turned in and went to sleep.

When James Harding reached his own rooms, he sat down and went over his brother's bills again. He made an extract from the list, writing down on a sheet of paper a number of bills which amounted to upwards of a couple of hundred pounds, and which were bills for cigars, jewelry, and such luxuries as would be most likely to arouse the anger of the trustees. Then he copied out the remaining bills on another sheet of paper, which he enclosed to Mr. Wisby, with a letter advising him to settle with as little delay as possible, and assuring him that they were all that were unpaid.

The next day he went to his own bank and drew enough to settle all the accounts in the extract he had made; and then he went and paid them, having been deputed to do so, as he told the tradesmen, by his brother's trustees.

I have told you that the brothers had been left a sum of money apiece. James had somewhat shrunk his in his first year, but had learned wisdom, and lived more carefully now. Nevertheless, when he drew the two hundred and odd, to pay his brother's debt, he left himself only just enough to carry him to his degree.

Mr. Wisby and Mr. Slowman shook their heads over the statement of Edward's debts. They clucked and croaked with a hundred hen-and-frog-power. They wrote him long and serious letters on extravagance and folly, and the certain results of such conduct. But there was one thing they did not do. They did not take James's advice, and pay the bills at once. The result was that the tradesmen began to dun Edward, and he had to order more things of them to keep them quiet. In this way, by the time the "two men of business" in London had made up their minds to send the money, Edward had begun to build up another pile of debt. And the worst of it was, that when the trustees had paid the first batch of bills, they had only just enough left in

their hands to keep Edward at college, provided he exhibited the strictest economy, and passed his two examinations at the very first chance.

Let our story tell itself, however. The accounts were sent in to Edward's trustees, and he, naturally enough, supposed that they would be settled, and so troubled himself very little about them, except when some dun became a little too pertinacious. Then Edward wrote a reminder to "the governors," and went and ordered a lot more goods in from the troublesome creditor, taking the opportunity of telling him he was daily expecting a check from his trustees.

Meanwhile, although the dog and dulcimer no longer revisited the glimpses of the moon in St. Thomas's, Emily Prior and Mary Freshfield found that the air on the Eynsham Road was particularly pleasant, and chose the Witham fields, especially, for their constitutionals. About this time Edward Harding and Tom Martindale suddenly developed an unusual aptitude for pedestrian exercise. As I have told you, these young gentlemen had hitherto preferred a drive, or a punt, or a saunter in the city of Oxford, to long rambles in the neighborhood. Now, however, they extended their walks, and, by an odd coincidence, their favorite stroll was along the Seven Bridge Road towards the Witham fields. Under these circumstances it was not extraordinary that they should frequently meet the girls, and, having met them, should join them, and wander away across the meadows, — Tom and Mary in front, laughing and joking merrily, and Edward and Emily behind, arm in arm, talking that delicious nonsense which is the language of young lovers.

One morning towards the end of term, as Edward Harding was just finishing his toilet on his return from morning chapel, Tom came bounding into the room.

"Ted! Hullo! ain't you up yet?" This from the sitting-room.

"Up? Rather! Why, I've been to chapel, where you ought to have been, if a proper and respectable bringing up, and the companionship of a well-conducted man like myself were not altogether wasted on you!" was the answer from the bedroom.

"You'd better finish tying your scarf, Ted. I know that's what your mind is occupied with, you're talking such rubbish. Look sharp, though, there's a good fellow, for I've news to tell you."

"Well, tell on, your servant heareth!"

"O, bother! Not till you come out and sit down to your breakfast."

"Here I am, then!" said Ted, issuing from the bedroom.

"And how resplendent! That Rob Roy tartan scarf is one of those quiet, unassuming things which become you, and which you have always the good taste to choose. And as for that parting, especially at the back, Ted, it could not have been straighter if you had been Spierized."

"You seem in high spirits, T. M. What has happened? Has the governor been told to form a Ministry, and has he appointed you Secretary for Foreign Affairs?"

"Not exactly that, but something almost as good. He has got me a commission!"

"The deuce he has! What shall I do when you're gone, Tom?"

"I really can't say, — but it's like your brutality to make the most of your opportunity while you have me. Why don't you give me some breakfast?"

"Why don't you help yourself? And so you are going to hang your cap and gown on a willow-tree, and be off to the wars again?"

"Yes!"

'Tom Martindale to the wars is gone,
In the Light Dragoons you'll find him,
His father's sword he has girded on,' —

which is quite within the bounds of possibility, for he was an officer in the Yeomanry, and is a Deputy-Lieutenant, —

'And his wild harp slung behind him.'

I add that for rhyme's sake, for although my mother has got a harp, — a Clementi, too, — I don't think she'll give it me as part of my military outfit; and if she did I should n't be such a fool as to break my back with it."

And so with a laugh the two lads sat down to breakfast. If we believed appearances, we should be inclined to think them easily reconciled to their speedy separation. But the levity was assumed. They were ashamed to let each other see how they felt the step, now that it was irrevocable. While it had been in contemplation they had joked and laughed over it without thinking much about it, but now, face to face with the fact, they were sadder than they cared to confess.

In spite of their attempts, the breakfast was rather a dull one.

"Are you going to the Dean's Georgic lecture?" asked Ted, after a pause, putting down the pewter which Keen brought in at the end of the meal.

"No! not I! If I have only a short time to stay in this region of bliss, I'm not going to waste any of it on the Dona. But

I'll send up and ask the Dean to excuse me all the same, for he happens to be a gentleman, which is more than you can say for the others, and I won't be rude to him."

"Well, if you don't go, I sha'n't!"

"Do as you please, Mr. Harding, but don't say I set you a bad example. Lectures, remember, young man, can be of little service to a party who is more likely to be employed in the imminent deadly breach than the observance of the statutes. To a gentleman who is destined to shake the pulpit desk and fulmine over the clerk, lectures are invaluable, if only to act as a warning against the infliction of long sermons!"

"Come, I'll bet you I'm a bishop before you're a general, although you do seem to think your prospects so brilliant."

"I see the sun of glory arising from the ocean," said Tom, as he took up the pewter to have a pull at the beer.

"Ah, my dear! that's only the pattern of the glass in the bottom of the pewter"; and they both laughed heartily.

The tankard was a quart one, and the bottom was of yellow glass, with a white star cut in it. Since the day when Edward Harding won that cup in the pair-oar race in his first term (it had the college arms and the names of the crew engraved on the side) he had watched that star rise and set a good many times in good wholesome college ale.

They brewed their own ale at Denbigh, and capital ale it was. I wish I had a tun of it here now, — don't be shocked, my dear reader! the wish is a modest one. I am not asking for a huge vat of it, but only for one of those quaint little silver cups which they call "tuns" at Denbigh, and which hold about a third of a pint, and have a whistle under the handle that you cannot make use of until you've emptied the cup, and then you may — whistle for more.

Tom Martindale had educated Ted into a preference for the college beer, and it would have been well for them if all the lads had confined their potations to that noble liquor. The stuff which they drank and paid for, or made their relatives pay for, as wine, was poisonous, as a rule, and the beer would have done them infinitely more good.

"Ted," said Tom, after he had made the sun rise in remarkably full splendor at the bottom of the tankard, — "Ted, why don't you cut the parson and come soldiering with me?"

"Should n't I just like it, Tom, that's all! But you see those confounded trustees would n't hear of my doing anything else.

However, I shall be my own master in another year, and then we'll see!"

"When we come into our estate, eh?"

"Yes, man's estate, that's all."

"Why, that's only liability for debt."

"Don't mention it. I had three polite notes from Sawkins and Hylvester, two demands from Scottinger, the Vice-Chancellor's Court proctor, and about half a dozen ticks, with a request that I would attend to them before the end of term, all lying on my table when I came back from chapel."

"You should n't have gone to chapel, and then it would n't have happened."

"It's pretty clear you have n't been to the logic lecture lately, Tom."

"One fact is worth a thousand arguments, Edward Longshanks. I did *not* go to chapel this morning, and day began for me without any of those dun clouds you complain of. Instead of ticks, I got my commission and an elegant letter from the old boy. By the way, though, talking of letters, give me a sheet of note-paper. I must just drop Mary a line to tell her of it."

Edward set down the pewter which he had taken up, and looked at Tom. Tom blushed, and smoked furiously.

"Had n't I better open the window, Tom, if you're going to blow like that? I have n't got any blighted geraniums to be benefited by it."

"You're a donkey, Ted; the pipe was nearly out, and I was getting it well alight."

"Indeed, and while the vesuvian was still red-hot in it? That pipe must go out very easily."

"If the pipe does n't you will, and through the window you have so obligingly opened for that purpose, if you are impatient."

"I shall not be overawed by military insolence, Cornet Martindale of the Horse Marines. Here, — here's the note-paper. Had n't you better have a sheet of letter-paper to break the intelligence?"

"I'll break your neck, sir, just by way of getting my hand in."

"O, these soldiers! what dragons they are!" said Ted, as he walked off towards the window, leaving Tom to write his note to Mary. As he leant on the sill, looking out into the Old Quad, he grew very melancholy when he thought over the coming parting with Tom Martindale. The two had been so much together that they were to a considerable extent isolated from the rest of the men in the college. I think, if the truth were told, the other men did not like this very exclusive friendship, — were in a quite unaccountable way jealous of the intimacy. At any rate, Edward felt that

when Tom left he should feel almost as friendless as he was when he came up in his first term. He could not repress a sigh. It was echoed. He turned round. Tom had finished his letter, but was still sitting, pen in hand, and with his eyes fixed on vacancy. The involuntary sigh that echoed Edward's had been his. Edward did not quite know how to rouse him from his reverie. He did not like to speak, so he softly whistled the air of Moore's delightful song, "Go where glory waits thee."

Tom looked up.

"Why that sigh, Thomas?"

"Did I sigh? I did n't know it. — Poor little Mary, she's a jolly little girl!"

"Hullo! why, he's beginning to be spooney about a girl that he is always bantering and bothering when he sees her."

"That's because I am not a good hand at the sentimental twaddle that you entertain Emily with. You talk to her in rhyme, don't you? love and dove, and mine and thine, and Emily and — and — what do you rhyme with Emily, Ted?"

"What do I reason with you, you old muff! But seriously, Tom, do you care for Mary Freshfield?"

"She's the dearest and best little girl in the world!"

"Have you told her so?"

"No. She would n't believe me if I did. Somehow we have got into such a habit of chaffing each other that we could n't say anything sensible or earnest."

"Do you think she cares for you, Tom?"

"How can I tell? I dare say she does, and yet, somehow, I dare say she does n't."

"Then you've never made love to her?"

"Duce a bit!"

"And yet you love her?"

"Well, if you put it in that form, upon my soul, Ted, I believe I do. She's the dearest little girl in the world!"

"Heigh-ho! here we go!" as the poet says. Thomas loved Mary, and never told his love. Edward is engaged to Emily, and, upon my soul, I don't think he cares a dump about her. Such is life."

"That remarkable and original remark of yours is exactly my sentiments. Such is life."

CHAPTER VI.

SOME COMMONPLACE LOVE-MAKING.

WHERE'S the meet this afternoon, Tom?" asked Edward of his friend on the day after that on which Tom had received the news of his commission.

"At Bagley Wood, Ted. I thought it

would not be quite so public as the Witham fields."

"A very wise change. To tell you the truth, I'm getting awfully sick of those eternal fields."

"O the monster! Sick of fields in which he meets his Emily, and sighing for pastures new! O Edward, Edward,"—here Tom assumed a falsetto,—"could I have believed this when I gave you my young affections!"

"Look here, Tom, don't joke on that subject. It's deuced unpleasant. Here am I, like a fool, tying myself up to a girl about whom I am caring less and less every day. What am I to do?"

"Tell her the truth."

"Well, you see, I fancy she is really fond of me, poor thing, and so that would n't do. No, I must put a bold face on it, and try, if possible, to conceal from her the altered state of my feelings."

"Do you know, Ted, I think it would be fairer to her to speak the truth at once. It must come out some day."

"I have n't the courage, Tom. Consider the poor girl's feelings. At any rate, it is not her fault, and she does not deserve to suffer."

"Go your own way, Ted. Meanwhile, perhaps you had better go and adorn yourself. I told Keen to put some hot water in your room. Make haste, there's a good fellow, because time's short, and it's a fairish step there."

"All right. I'll be ready before you!"

"No, don't!" shouted Tom as he ran up stairs, "for if you do you will not be able to devote all the requisite attention to your toilet; and you do look so nice when you've 'cleaned yourself and put on your things.'"

The two friends were soon ready, Tom Martindale, after all, being ready first, winning, as he said, by a short necktie. It was a standing joke of his against Edward that the latter spent a quarter of an hour tying his scarf. If he did, the result quite compensated for the loss of time, for the way in which Ted arranged his scarf was artistic and symmetrical to a degree. In those days there were none of those ready-made inventions we see in shop-windows now. Men had to tie and fold their own scarfs, and skill in so doing was much envied among the lads. Edward was never tired of telling how the incomparable Wayward once produced a cravat of striking pattern from a drawer where he had kept it "purposely for Mr. Harding, because he was a gentleman who did a scarf credit by his tying."

When the lads reached Bagley Wood, they found Emily and Mary awaiting them.

Mary was looking pale and worn, Tom remarked, but he did not say anything.

"Now, you children, go and play," said Edward, flinging himself down at the feet of Emily, who was sitting on a bank. "Stop a moment, though, Tom. Have you got any lights? Thanks! You shall have the box back. Don't quarrel, there's good children."

He lit a cigar, and began talking nonsense to Emily, comparing her cheeks to the dog-roses in the hedge above, and her eyes to what Jean Ingelow has so exquisitely described,—

"A mist of bluebells on the slope and down the dell."

Edward Harding was a good talker, and, like a good many lazy men, a great reader of poetry, so that he had plenty to say to Emily. She was clever enough to be in a perpetual state of admiration of his talents, and that flattered him into an easy endurance of what but for that would have become by this time very wearisome.

Tom and Mary wandered away through the wood together. They began the conversation with an affectation of their old fun and trifling. But as they got beyond hearing of the other two, their tone insensibly changed, and perhaps for the first time since their acquaintance they found themselves talking seriously and earnestly.

"So you are going into the army, Mr. Martindale?" said Mary, half turning away to pick a trail of bindweed.

"Mr. Martindale." Hulloo! what have I done?"

"Well, Tom, then. There! But I wanted to be serious."

"Can't you be serious without calling me names?"

"Don't be silly, sir."

"I can't help it, indeed I can't. Besides, officers in cavalry regiments are expected to be silly."

"O, please don't!" said Mary, very earnestly, turning to him, and laying a hand on his arm. "We can talk quietly for once, can't we, now you're going away?"

"We'll try, at any rate, Mary dear."

As he said that she looked at him inquiringly, as if to satisfy her own mind as to whether he used the adjective mechanically or with a tender meaning.

"Where do you go?"

"Wherever the regiment may happen to be sent. It is to go on active service against Russia; that is all I know."

"What, going to the war?" asked Mary, stopping suddenly and turning very pale.

"Why, my dear child, it's only because of the war that I enter the army!"

"Yes ; but I thought — that is, I was told — that officers had to go to some home battalion to learn drill and that sort of thing."

"The depot ; well, it is usual, I believe, but you see I am an old soldier. I was ensign in our militia at my father's place in Devonshire ; and the governor has some interest too !"

"And you are really going out into danger ?" she asked in a faint voice.

"Of course ; but, hullo ! what's the matter ? Why, Mary, my darling, what's this about ?"

She had held up against it for a time as well as she could, but her fortitude had given way at last. The place seemed to turn round with her, and she tottered and would have sunk to the ground but for Tom's arm, which he passed round her waist, leading her to a fallen tree that formed a capital seat, the gnarled roots twining into rude backs and arms.

"My darling girl, tell me, is all this alarm and distress on my account ?"

She did not answer, but hid her blushing face in her hands and sobbed.

"Come, come ; you must cheer up. Nonsense ! there's no danger. Nothing's never in danger, and you've often told me I was nothing."

She looked up, smiling faintly.

"'Nothing to me,' I said," she murmured.

"Was it true ?" asked Tom, sinking his voice unconsciously into the same tone as hers.

She looked at him for a moment, and then her eyes filled with tears, and she turned them away, as she answered, —

"What should you be ? I shall always remember you as a kind friend, and shall recollect how many pleasant hours we have spent together."

"And nothing more, Mary ?"

"Nothing more, Tom. But won't you think of me, too, sometimes ?"

"Always, Mary darling. But is there nothing more than this to be ? You know what I am going to say —"

She laid her hand on his lips.

"My kind friend Tom, you must not forget that Mary Freshfield is a poor girl, — a farmer's daughter, — who earns her living as a governess. You are the son of a gentleman of high position and considerable means. That is why we must be very good friends, and nothing more."

"You silly child ! do you think I care two brass farthings about position or any of the nonsense you have been talking ? There is only one question about it !"

"And that is —"

"Can't you guess, Mary ? It is the question whether you love me. Will you tell me ?"

He seated himself on the tree beside her, and drew her towards him. She did not resist, but she kept her face resolutely turned away from him.

"If I tell you, it cannot alter what must be, Tom. Only misery and trouble can come to you if you —"

"Do you love me, Mary ?"

"O, hush, hush ! It cannot do you good to have my answer. I should be a blight on your career, a stumbling-block in your path. The woman who loves a man ought to be a blessing to him, — an encouragement —"

"Be that blessing to me, dearest Mary. Tell me, — do you love me ?"

"Let us go back to the others !" She struggled to get away from him, but he held her in her place firmly, not roughly.

"Let me go !" she said, in an agitated voice. "I must not stop, or I shall say what I must not say. In pity, let me go !"

"Why ?"

"Only harm and ill and trouble can come of it, Tom. Let me go !"

"I will, if you'll answer my question."

"You promise ?"

"I do. Do you love me, Mary ?"

She turned round towards him, half leaning on his shoulder, as he clasped a hand in each of his. He tried to look into her face, but she hid it behind his shoulder as she whispered the very faintest little "Yes" that was ever heard in the world. He folded her in his arms, and planted one long fond kiss on her forehead.

"You said you'd let me go, Tom," she pleaded.

"You could n't go away, darling, after telling me that. You must hear me tell you how fondly I have loved you since we first met."

The old terror came back into her face.

"O, please, please don't ! I can't bear to think of it. O, to think of how we first became acquainted ! We must not — indeed we must not — speak of this any more. O, how very terrible this is !" And the big tears came into her eyes again.

"Hush, you foolish child," said Tom, drawing her towards him, and clasping her in his arms, so that her head rested on his shoulder.

"What will come of this ?" she asked plaintively, as she lay quite resigned, like a child that has almost cried itself to sleep. He looked down into the soft brown eyes gazing up in his so pleadingly, and his

heart was full of a bliss which no words of mine can tell.

"My own, — my darling," he said, tenderly, "what can come of it, if we really love one another! Nothing on earth can divide us."

"O Tom, what will your friends say?"

The question was an awkward one. Tom pictured to himself the manner in which his father would hear the announcement of his engagement.

"They won't like it, I know," said Tom, after a pause; "but that can't be helped. They must learn to like it."

But Mary had read his thoughts in the expression of his face.

"Tom, dear Tom, reflect once more. Think of your father's displeasure and the disapprobation of your family. You surely would not pay such a price for a poor silly little body like me! There, let me go. It has been a pleasant little dream just for the last five minutes. It's over now. Let us never speak of it again."

"Do you think I can resign you so easily as that, Mary? No, not if all the fathers in the world were to be enraged at me. Mine now, — mine forever, — mine till death."

She gave a little sigh of happiness, and ceased to struggle; and this time, when he bent down to kiss her, her lips met his, and sealed the plight they had taken.

And then Tom began to speak of the future, — of the glorious chances which the war would give him. He might defy the anger of his family, should Fortune favor him and give him an opportunity of distinguishing himself in the field. And as he spoke of it he inspired Mary with his own enthusiasm, until they began to think of this splendid future not as what might be, but as what would be. They did not wonder whether, but when, it would come.

Who does not know the visions of coming greatness, the splendid successes, that young love conjures up? Who has not tasted that delicious intoxication? Who has not seen glimpses of that glorious future? Tom and Mary forgot, in its distant brightness, the dark shade of sorrow and separation that was so near at hand.

"Have you a knife, Tom?" asked Mary, at last, when the long silence into which they had fallen, musing on the present and the future, had become almost painful.

"Here it is. What do you want?"

She did not answer him, but, reaching up, severed one of his curly locks, and then, placing the penknife in his hand, held up one of her own ringlets. Tom cut off a glossy ring or two, and kissed it reverently.

"And now it's getting late, Tom dear, and we must be going home."

"Why does it get late? I've sunshine enough in my heart now to make it day for another twelve hours. Heigh-ho!"

"Shall we tell them, Tom?"

"I shall tell Ted this evening."

"Well, then, I will tell Emily. You know that she and Edward are engaged?"

"Yes; he has told me so."

She stopped for a moment. They had by this time risen, and were walking towards the place where they left Edward and Emily.

"Tom," asked Mary, gravely, standing before him, and looking up into his face, with both her hands laid on his arm, — "Tom, I think they have mistaken their feelings towards each other."

Tom nodded.

"You don't think it possible that we have?"

"Nonsense, Mary! Does n't your heart tell you very differently?"

"Yes, perhaps!" And she smiled tenderly. "However, what I was going to say is that we had better not interfere with them. I mean, if by chance they quarrel and break it off, I don't think we ought to try and bring them together again, though it might be more agreeable for us. I know Emily well, and if they do quarrel she won't ask me to Oxford any more, so that you and I may meet."

"Oho! is that her temperament? Well, Mary, I will tell you this much, that if they do break it off, you and I might try with all our mights to bring about a reconciliation, but I know that one of them would never consent to it."

"Ah! I suspected so. Tom, promise me one thing?"

"A thousand, if you'll only make them things I can do."

"Promise me always to treat me as you used to do before. Don't ever talk to me as he does to her!"

"Law bless you, Mary, Ted's a bit of a poet, and I'm nothing of the sort. Don't be frightened on that score."

They were coming now to the turn in the ride that would bring them in sight of the others. Tom stopped, and threw his arms round Mary once more.

"My own darling, my treasure! Tell me once again, — only this once, — do you love me?"

She did not answer him in words, but she reached up and drew his face down to hers, and kissed him on the lips. There was nothing unmaidenly in the action, it was so simply and trustfully done. And

as she kissed him she met his loving look with her frank, honest brown eyes.

When they rejoined Edward and Emily, the latter, with a woman's shrewdness, divined at a glance what had taken place.

They all walked homeward together until they were about a mile from Oxford, when they separated, the girls walking some distance in front, the lads following, cigar in mouth, as if just returning from a constitutional.

When they were about half a mile from the town, they met a gig with two persons in it. Tom and Edward saw them nodding to the girls, but thought little of it until they saw that Emily and Mary were thrown into a terrible state of confusion by the encounter. Then, as the gig came nearer, they were able to understand their embarrassment, for one of its occupants was no other than Mr. Prior himself, the driver being Mr. Copple, the veterinary surgeon, a near neighbor of Prior's, who frequently dropped in for a pipe and glass of grog with him.

"Whew!" whistled Tom, "if old Prior does n't see through our little game, he's a bigger flat than I take him for."

"Perhaps he doesn't know us again. It was dark, you know, and we have n't got Lolo with us now."

"O, he recognized us, I'm certain. I saw the old beggar grin savagely. He has a nice smile, has n't he? Does Emily take it from her father?"

"Don't be a brute, Tom."

That evening, in Tom's room, Ted heard the story of the plighting of the lovers as the friends were discussing a bottle of claret. And at night, when Tom went to bed, he remarked to Phyllis, as he tucked her up in the blankets at the foot, —

"Lolo, your master's been and gone and popped the question, so your dear old nose is out of joint. But she's very fond of you, lassie."

Phyllis looked up affectionately, and made furtive darts to lick Tom's hand as he arranged the blankets round her.

The next morning Tom came down to Edward Harding with rather a blank face.

"What's the matter now, Tom?"

"Read," said Martindale, thrusting a little pink note into Edward's hand. It ran thus: —

DEAREST TOM: We have had a terrible do-do here this evening. Mr. Prior has accused me of leading Emily into mischief, and we have had words in consequence. I leave to-morrow; luckily, I had heard of a situation two days ago. Tell Edward that

Emily is forbidden to stir out of doors. The servant has been sent away (she is going to post this for me), and Mr. P. vows he will go to the proctor or to the principal of Denb. Coll. I should not be much surprised if he paid Edward a visit, so tell him to be on his guard. Shall I see you again before you go abroad? I am sadly afraid not. I won't tell you where my situation is until I have been there, and seen what the people are like. I leave by the ten-fifteen train in the morning. Good by, dearest Tom. This isn't a love-letter, is it? But I don't think you'd care about one, so you sha'n't have one from

Your own loving

MARY.

"That's a pleasant look-out, Tom!"

"What, old Prior's calling? You'd better see him, I fancy."

"I must protect the girl at any price, and I'm afraid, Tom, that it will end by fixing my fetters more firmly! I'm the unluckiest beggar in the world."

"Poor little Mary!" sighed Tom, — "back again to that miserable drudgery. Look sharp, old boy, and give me my breakfast, for I must run down to the station and see the poor girl off!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE BLACK FLAG HUNG OUT.

FROM quiet, learned, semi-monastic Oxford to a huge roaring factory of a midland city is a change indeed. It was the change which came in due time for James Harding, when he had taken his honors, and put on his gown, and found his curacy for a title. For my own very humble part, it has appeared to me at times that an Oxford life is about the worst possible preparation that could be thought of for a cadet of the Church Militant. We don't rear our cadets for the army in the same way. They have to rough it, and to learn drill, and submit to discipline, and act in miniature the soldier's life they will have to lead. But the lads who are to follow the "drum ecclesiastic" have no such training. Even the most hard-working undergraduate at the University leads a lazy life compared with the real life he will have to lead in the world under any circumstances, and a very lazy life indeed compared with what that of a clergyman anywhere — and most of all in a large manufacturing town — ought to be. I remember with what awe and wonder I regarded an Oxford friend of

mine, who, returning on a visit a full-fledged parson before I had completed my career, told me of his duties at L—. The man, whom I remembered the jolliest companion at a feast or a fray, was leading the life of an ascetic, spending his day in the strongholds of fever and famine, lunching frugally on a biscuit carried in his pocket and eaten at snatches as he went about on his labors. He was frightfully ill at last, — perhaps, for all I know, incapacitated for hard work for life, for he dropped out of sight, as most of your Oxford acquaintances do.

I wonder whether want of training had anything to do with his failure! There are few men who can take up an oar in a racing eight to any purpose without the preliminary discipline.

James Harding took no very high honors. He was a third-class only in Mods, though some had thought — and they were pretty good judges too — that if he missed his first, he would get at least no less than a second. It is not impossible that the distress of mind into which James was thrown by his discovery of his brother's difficulties and disagreement with his guardians might have somewhat influenced the result of his reading. At any rate, after getting only a third in Mods, he determined to abandon the idea of reading for honors in Greats. Certain it is, he gave this last as his reason for doing so to his tutors and to those friends who did not consider the first repulse any augury against future success. They had known men who were sent back among the passmen in Mods, and took double firsts in Greats. But I believe James Harding, over and above his disappointment, had another reason for relinquishing any attempt at a class, and bringing his university career to a close as speedily as possible.

We remember the little extract he made from the list of Edward's debts, and the means he took to settle it. His brother, ignorant of this sacrifice, came, when times began to be hard with him, to James, and borrowed little sums which he could not immediately repay, and so the impecuniosity of the younger brother was communicated to the elder; and it was this that made him anxious to get away from Oxford as soon as he could.

James, therefore, went in for his last examination at the earliest opportunity, and to his great delight took an honorary fourth in the classical schools, and was complimented by the examiners in law and modern history.

Next to a first-class, I confess that I should like an honorary fourth-class. If a man fags away and reads for bare life for

years, when he gets a first-class he gets what he has aimed at and no more. What, as, if he gets even a second-class, he gets considerably less. But the man who aims simply at a pass, — who reads for the examination which is a necessity, — and who does so well that he is promoted to the classmen, is, to my mind, supremely blessed. To obtain what we try for is an unsatisfactory thing, — to win something unexpected is a veritable pleasure. Upon my word, if you press me, I fancy I shall admit directly that I think an honorary fourth is better than a first. But then I must own that I do not think very much of academical honors at any time.

Well, James took his honorary fourth, and put on his bachelor's gown, and then went down into the country and read for ordination. In order to keep his little stock of money intact, he accepted a tutorship to a couple of lads preparing for the University. They were sons of a clergyman with whom he had become acquainted, but who could not afford to pay very much. However, he interested himself to procure James a title, and at last found him one with an old friend who was incumbent of a church in the large midland manufacturing city of Liverchester.

So to this huge busy place of a thousand chimneys, over which hung a canopy of smoke all day and night, to blacken the palaces of commerce which its wealthy inhabitants were building for themselves everywhere out of the proceeds of prosperous trade, went the Reverend James Harding, B. A. of Trin : Coll : Oxon.

Before he had been long engaged at his work he found that the palaces of commerce were only a small portion of the city. Behind them and among them ran alleys teeming with poverty, misery, and crime, — human sewers disenboguing their horrors at times under the very nose of Wealth, which then for the first time learnt of their existence, and shuddered. Its first impulse was to give money to cure the evil, because that was the easiest thing it could do. It is astonishing how much of the so-called charity of Wealth is due to this fact. The next impulse was to call in the police. But with the latter mode of dispensing Christian charity we have nothing to do. The management of the funds came for the most part into James's hands.

The vicar under whom James worked had been a good, hard-working man in his day. But now that he had a church and congregation of his own, he felt it his duty to spend much time in the elaboration of his sermons, and the perfecting of his choir and services.

so curious to observe how often a really able clergyman gets into the habit of making his sermon the most important thing in the world. There was a time when I used to think that a knowledge of the English language and a good delivery were that would be necessary for an efficient sermon. Although I still consider that a sufficient knowledge of your own tongue to enable you to read the Lord's Prayer as it is highly necessary, I have seen that five virtues are more absolutely requisite than a musical voice, and the judicious use of a gloved hand.

"Are there no good clergymen?" Heaven forbid I should seem to say so! I would rather be understood to say that, considering their training, the number of young men who are divinely shaped—for they get no other schooling—into splendid shepherds is a pure miracle. It is perhaps more than likely that I include among the number of shepherds—I have selected a name that rather implies activity than palaver-power—a great many whom some pious folk might be inclined to look askance at. I know of fine fellows who give twenty-minute sermons, and go hunting on week-days, and who are on that account loved and respected by their rough parishioners,—parsons who do more good than (I don't say talk so much "goody" as) many a "snowy-banded, delicate-handed" gentleman, whose congregation does not despise him only because it cannot understand him.

Is not all this frightfully heterodox? I'm afraid it may seem so, but it is sincere. What do the clergy mean by that purposeless cackle they call Convocation? Why don't they do, instead of talk? What earthly purpose—not to mention heavenly—does it answer for a reverend canon to let off a "*gravamen* which is subsequently to be made an *articulus cleri* to the effect (or non-effect) that the Lower House sees with pleasure that the Upper House regrets,"—something or other. Regrets and pleasure and twaddle, with a vast sea of ignorance and vice and poverty on every side of them; and that sea, by the way, the deepest in those neighborhoods where the Church holds property!

There! I have said my say, and hope to be forgiven a little outspoken honesty. I know I shall. I believe that many a toiling curate, many a hard-working servant of the Church, if he should read those words would echo them, and would admit that twenty score Denisons thundering in Convocation are not doing a tithe as much good as one energetic A. C. London did going out

to do battle with the Devil in our great populous city. My dear good Reverend Melifluous Multiloquent,—to return to the more immediate subject suggested by James Harding's new work,—you may preach the most splendid sermons, but they don't make your parishioners good Christians half as easily as your wife's soup does, or your curate's poor mite wrung from a nigardly salary.

James Harding fell in with his duties at once. He was no musician, so he could not assist at the choir meetings; and he was not allowed to preach, except occasionally of an afternoon, when there was nobody at church. So he was able to go out into the highways and lanes of the great city. He was horror-struck at his first sight of the misery he found there, and felt inclined to sit down and give it up, if not cry. It was absolutely appalling. But by and by he took heart of grace, and when he once faced the evil, he found, like all evils, it was not so terrible as it looked.

He was a gentleman, was our James, and he made a good impression at the outset of his ministrations that stood him in good stead. He never walked into any poor person's house uninvited. Though the front door of the hovel opened boldly into the parlor, he never dreamed of going in until he had learned whether his visit was well timed and agreeable.

"I should n't walk into Mr. McOttengood's without waiting for the footman to ask me," said he to a brother curate, who seemed surprised at his punctiliousness, "and I consider this poor operative has a right to the privacy of his own room as well as you, or I, or Mr. McOttengood."

And James Harding was right, and the poor people respected him for this consideration. When visitors, ever so intimate, call upon you, my dear reader, they are ushered into a drawing-room reserved specially for company; or if you are above that folly (which I hope you are), before they come into your sitting-room there are little odds and ends to be set right, something to be pushed under the sofa-cushion, and the butcher's bill to be put into the sideboard-drawer. Why should not poor people have their modest concealments too?

James never had been a dandy like his brother Edward, but he had always dressed well, and wore a heavy and handsome gold chain and watch. Now he wore black, of course; but he laid aside the gold watch and chain, wearing a common silver one on a silk guard.

"It is n't that I'm afraid of losing them," he explained; "for though I see some rough

characters about, I don't for a moment believe they would rob me of a halfpenny. But I feel one has no right to go and flout such absolute penury with such unnecessary evidence of being well off. Strictly, I believe one ought to sell such trinkets when one has once discovered the immeasurable amount of distress there is, that can only be relieved by money. But I have n't yet reached that point of self-denial, for the watch was a present from my father, and the chain a birthday gift from my mother."

From morning till night did this worthy fellow toil away in this neglected portion of the vineyard, while some of his fellow-laborers were singing and genuflecting at the more aristocratic end of it.

He was not alone in his good work. The Catholic priests labored in the same dark corners; and every now and then the gloom was lighted up by some angel in woman's form, who came to the sick and needy, bringing a blessing and light which no man can contrive to diffuse.

Nevertheless, James Harding was one of the most popular among the poor. The veriest shrew lowered her voice when she heard the parson's knock at the door; the roughest vagabond that ever made home a misery assumed a more human demeanor before him. The children squalled and brawled less, and smiled more at the sight of him, and even the curs who snarled and bit at strangers welcomed him with a condescending wag of the tail.

Among the aged and the sick he was almost worshipped. Feeble old creatures, who had scarcely enough vitality left in them to retain any interest in mundane affairs, used to wag their poor old heads with feeble delight at his approach; and as for those who were ill, —

"When his hand unbarred the shutter,
The clammy lips of fever smiled
The welcome that they could not utter."

Before he had been in his curacy long there were very, very many who welcomed him thus. For that terrible scourge of populous cities, the cholera, was brooding over Liverchester, and the people were down on their straw pallets struggling for their poor lives with the great grim destroyer.

What hosts of ragged little funerals shambled along the lanes and courts at first! But the visitation was too terrible even for that, soon, and the wretched coffins were jolted off without a single following mourner, and cast into the yawning pits without the city.

How they fought, these poor creatures! — How they clung to their lives as if their existences were all bliss and competence!

How the fathers and mothers sat down by the cold hearths and wept their poor hearts out because there was a little one lying dead and cold on the straw in the corner! — one mouth the less to feed, said Job's comforters. It was wonderful to think that even such miserable beings had ties they were loath to sever, and that love could survive such abject wretchedness.

They hung black flags at the end of the streets at last, wherever the disease was raging worst. Down those lonely, silent streets few people passed. Only the doctor or the minister of God, or perchance some kind woman who was not to be kept back from doing good, even by such a terror as this.

But I must admit that a number of those who in better times had visited the sick and poor, had kept penny clubs, and clothing clubs, and distributed soup-tickets, and Dorcas flannel petticoats and blankets, began to discover that, after all, real charity begins at home, — and so stopped there.

There had been a very fine volunteer corps assisting the regular army of the Church Militant in the stricken city while the invader was yet only threatening. As soon as the assailant had made good his lodgement, many of the volunteers began to find it was their duty to defend each his or her own particular hearth and home.

But the little army closed up its ranks gallantly, and fought all the better for the knowledge that the skulkers had gone away on "urgent private affairs."

One of the few volunteers who were not frightened away by the cholera was a young lady, whose patience and whose earnestness had long been James Harding's admiration. Her name was Prudence Heath, and she was the niece of a large manufacturer in the town. Her parents were dead, and this uncle was her trustee, having charge of her money, but not interfering with her tastes and pursuits.

Those tastes and pursuits were very different from those of her cousins, the Goldings, who loved wealth and display, whereas this meek little woman found her chief delight in going among the poor, teaching, comforting, and assisting, for she was plentifully supplied with pocket-money. Her uncle did not approve of her doings, but did not interfere with them, because he did not care to quarrel with her. She was heiress to a large fortune, which she was not to receive till her marriage, and not then, even, if her trustee disapproved of it. The money had been left in this manner by her father, who, having married for money himself, against the wishes of his parents,

I been very wretched, thought he could insure his daughter's happiness.

Her uncle entertained the idea of marrying her to his own son, a sickly lad some 5 years younger than she was. But as he had not revealed his scheme, and was only anxious to keep on good terms with her. In the event of her marrying without his consent, half of the property went to charities and half to him, and he naturally wished to keep the whole in the family.

So for long after the trouble fell upon Liverchester, this good little creature, in her modest black gown, with her thick veil, was to be seen speeding about on errands of mercy through the streets in which the sickness raged most terribly.

But at last she disappeared from the scene. James sighed, and shook his head sadly.

"Another false heart, — another deserter from our scanty ranks. I'm sorry for it, too, for I thought she was too good and brave for that."

Some month or so after, one day, as James was quitting a hovel where the sickness was at its very worst, he met the quiet little figure in black just entering.

"Ah! Miss Heath, we thought you had deserted. It is very long since you have come among us."

"I have been ill," she said in a low voice.

"I thought that might be it. This sort of thing makes one nervous, and one fancies all sorts of things till one is laid up."

James spoke this in a tone that seemed to make light of her illness. I think he had not quite forgiven his most promising volunteer's failure in the hour of need.

"My illness was no fancy, Mr. Harding," she answered in the same subdued tone, raising her veil as she spoke.

James started back. Her round, pretty face had often come pleasantly to bring a bit of sunlight to his work. There was no round, plump face now. She was thin and pale, and had evidently suffered terribly.

"Good Heavens! Miss Heath, you must have been dangerously ill indeed. You must not venture among all the sickness yet."

"I must go. I can't stop away any longer now I'm well."

"You are not well yet. And you really need not expose yourself to such danger."

"You expose yourself to it daily."

"It is my duty."

"You would not dare to tell me it is not mine."

James was silent, and suffered her to do as she chose, but his fears were not ground-

less. In another week he missed the little black figure again, and heard that Miss Heath was dangerously ill, and not expected to live.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CHARGE OF THE HEAVY BRIGADE.

IF I took a leap from Oxford to Liverchester in the last chapter, I am going to carry you still farther from those classic shades this time. Time has sped on, the spring of 1854 has given place to the autumn, and in the September of that year — at a time when he had been usually employed in shooting partridges — Tom Martindale, a cornet in the 8th Dragoon Guards, saw, from the slopes above the then unknown little river Alma, the French and English troops carry the heights beyond that stream, and so impress on the Russian what they could do in the field, that he never stopped to show them fight in the open again.

If you want to know how that battle was fought and won, you must, if you please, refer to Mr. Kinglake's description of it, which, to my mind, is equal to Homer, and brings as distinctly before the reader's eyes the successive movements of that interesting contest, as well as the individual acts of gallantry by which names now familiar as household words were first brought under the public notice.

The 8th Dragoon Guards — a famous regiment, and one which bore on its flag the names of many world-renowned battles — were not engaged at the Alma. They sat out watching the game and fuming. They would have liked to ride up the precipitous banks right into the flaming batteries, if they had only been allowed. But it was not a contest to be decided by their arm of the service, so they sat out, fidgeting in their saddles, while that glorious "thin red line" — so slender, but so tough — crept up the hillside and drove the Russians before it.

What a fight it was! Splendid not only in its own intrinsic bravery and pluck, but because it was the first victory achieved by British arms (nearer than the fabulous East) since the old days of that great commander, the uncle of our late faithful ally.

Boys who had glowed to read of Waterloo had grown into the men who swept up that deadly slope from the little brook, and made history for other lads to read. Soldiers who had envied the gray-headed veterans that Wellington had commanded, achieved on that hillside experience which future heroes would covet. Those who had gazed with something like awe upon the old

warriors who had tasted combat, found themselves suddenly in the midst of battle.

After the victory came the advance and the flank march, followed by the capture of Balaklava. So far, Tom had only been a spectator. But the time was coming when he was to see more of war.

Tom had taken his farewell of Mary Freshfield, and had bidden good by to Edward Harding, without exactly realizing what it was to go into the very jaws of death. When the siege commenced, on the 17th of October, with the memorable roar of a hundred and twenty monstrous pieces of ordnance, replied to by more than an equal number of Russian guns, — when the rush of the huge shot and the jar of bursting shells made the atmosphere one vast pervading sound, he began to feel a little what war was like. And I incline to believe that he wished himself out of it, and small blame to him, for if there be a trying position for a raw soldier in this world, it is being perched in a saddle to be bowled at by cannon-balls, without the slightest chance of retaliation.

His hut was not very far from the Lancaster Gun Battery, and "whistling Dick" was a strange and troublesome neighbor. The cannonade used to begin at early dawn, and Tom used to wake from dreams of going home by the express train to find that the noise of his train was the hurtling of the missiles from his neighbor, "sibillating Richard."

Roused thus early, — and for a long time Tom found that when once you were waked by a cannonade it was no use trying to sleep again, — he used to sally out and look about him. Many a lovely morning he saw rise over the eastern hills, many a glorious sunset he saw sink in the west, — and between rising and sinking nothing went on but the incessant pounding of the big guns and the ringing pickaxes of the men in the trenches, carrying the works onward down the face of the slope. He found it growing monotonous after a time, and began to think of home and friends.

Before leaving Oxford he had held a long consultation with Edward Harding, and had advised him to leave the University and enter the army. Edward was hardly prepared to take so decided a step, although his debts were plaguing him sadly. Tom, however, gave him a letter of introduction to his father, in case he should alter his mind subsequently, and had requested the "governor" to do what he could to obtain his friend a commission, should he require it.

If the truth must be told, Tom Martin-

dale was nervously excited to a terrible degree by all this new experience of his, and in spite of its monotony was delighted with it. You see, his excitement was so great, that he found monotonous what others would consider too lively. For instance, I doubt if you or I should be inclined to call a life monotonous which offered the advantage of a possible shot or shell in your tent — not to say your own person — every ten minutes in the day. It seemed so to Tom Martindale, living in a perpetual artificial state of high pressure.

By and by there came a new feature of interest into the scene which day after day greeted his eyes as he wandered to his favorite vantage-post on the brow of the plateau on which the army was encamped. In the valley of the Tchernaya there appeared to be gathering by slow degrees an army of Russians, which was, of course, to be hurled against our position sooner or later. With what anxious curiosity, therefore, these troops were watched, not only by Tom, but by a host of gallant fellows tugging in the slips, and longing to be in the fray, may be easily imagined.

Before long there was a sortie made at night against the French trenches, and not without success altogether, for the Russians, passing themselves off as English, contrived to penetrate into the lines, and bayonet some of the men at work before their ruse was discovered. After that Tom used of an evening to arm himself with a sword and revolver, and go down and spend a few hours in the English trenches. But the enemy did not attack them.

This desire to kill or to be killed must appear a very curious one to men of peace. It was indeed most inexplicable. Tom used to see men in the early gray of dawn stealing off with their rifles and their rations to some favorite spot whence they could fire at the enemy whenever a man showed. "Where are you going there?" was a frequent question. "I'm going to have a day's Russian-shooting!" was the invariable answer. And yet if, after knocking his bird over, the fortune of war had carried the marksman into the neighborhood of the wounded foeman, he would have been the first to tend his wounds, and take him carefully to the rear.

In the valley I have spoken of above, and on the low hills at the fork of the defile into two ravines, there was now gathered an army of about thirty thousand Russians, commanded by Liprandi. It was felt that before long this force would be employed against the English position.

On the 25th of October the movement

was made. Morning broke gray and chilly, and with the dawn came a long and sustained fire from the Russian guns, directed against the Turkish outposts. The Scotch Grays, with the Horse Artillery, were thrown forward to answer this challenge, and the field battery, though far inferior in the number and weight of its guns, behaved gallantly, and kept up a shrewish reply to the bluster of the enemy, until forced to retire for want of ammunition. Tom saw the Grays going into action, as he thought, and envied them terribly. But they had nothing to do but support the guns, and came back with them to the Heavy Brigade when the last round had been fired.

And then Tom had no chance to see any more, for it was time to join his own regiment, drawn up in the plain behind the encampment. He began to be conscious that the hour was at hand, and rode down to his men in a state of strange elation, singing snatches of old college songs, and feeling like a school-boy out for a holiday. He was born a soldier, was Tom.

About this time two massive columns of Russian cavalry advanced upon our position. It was a grand sight to see this great wave of war roll on down one slope and up the next, glittering in the morning sun, and rushing on rapidly to break on the English line.

The outworks—in a very unfinished and sketchy state as yet—were garrisoned by Turks. The pluck with which the Mussulmans had held their mud intrenchments on the Danube had led people to suppose that their fatalism made them incapable of flight. In this instance the illusion was rudely shattered. No sooner did the Turks in the advanced works see the Russian cavalry pouring down upon them than they let fly a random volley at them, bounded over their earthworks, and came running like deer down the slope. After all, it was not much to be wondered at, for they were fearfully outnumbered, and had no artillery to support them.

The Russians pushed forward still. But now a few guns on the heights opened upon them, and with telling aim. Before the smoke of the first discharge had cleared away, and while the third shot was still booming in the air, one column of the attacking cavalry was seized with a panic, — turned, — and fled.

Meanwhile, however, the other column moved on towards our position. It had fine galloping ground, for a plain of level sward stretched before it, — smooth as a bowling-green, and walled in on all sides by lofty eminences, from which the French and some

of the English divisions looked down upon the conflict.

It was time for our heavy cavalry to be on the alert now, and accordingly the Enniskillens and the Scotch Grays began to move forward. But they were drawn up, as I have said, behind the encampment, and before they had fairly got clear of it, the dark torrent of the enemy's horse was upon them. The odds were immensely against the English cavalry, and the enemy were further assisted by the momentum with which they rushed upon them, not yet free from the entanglement of tent-poles and ropes and picket-lines.

Back, back some hundred yards or more, were borne the struggling English troopers, fighting fiercely all the way. The red coats and gray horses showed clearly out in the dark turbulent flood which rolled on, still slower and slower after its meeting with our heavy cavalry.

The 5th Dragoon Guards were coming up to the support of the Grays and Enniskillens.

The 4th Dragoon Guards and the 8th — Tom's regiment — were pressing forward in column past a small vineyard.

Tom was in a burning fever of excitement. He put his horse at the low wall, sprang over, and gathering a hasty handful of grapes crushed them upon his parched lips. As he leaped into the open space again, a brother officer — an old hand, who had seen service in India — came up to him.

"That's unwise, my boy. You'll want all your horse can do in about a minute."

"So soon!"

"Look!"

He pointed to the plain beyond the vineyard. The head of the Russian column was just passing. Tom could hardly suppress a shout of joy.

The two regiments galloped on, and were soon clear of the vineyard walls. There they halted for a brief space to form, but it seemed an age. At last the necessary extension to the right had been effected, and the moment for the charge had arrived.

The old colonel — a fine gray-headed iron hero of many a fight under the fierce Eastern sun — cast a look along the line. Even the horses seemed fretting at the momentary inaction. There was a clatter and rattle of accoutrements and curb-chains as if they were all on the fret. Then the bugle rang out clear and silvery.

"Now then, men, by —!" cried the old colonel, and they were off.

During that brief delay, if the horses had fretted, the men had been burning with im-

patience, though the discipline told, and they did not show it outwardly. Some swore in subdued voices from sheer excitement, — some gave vent to prayers (more remarkable for fervor than Christian feeling) to be allowed "to go at 'em."

Now they were off. It was dead silence, save for the clash of arms and the beat of hoofs.

As they stretched over the turf, Tom remembered experiencing something like the feeling before, and — with his eyes still fixed on the enemy — began to recall the past, and recognized the recollections as that of a famous charge in old "Town and Gown" days. With his eyes still fixed on the enemy, he saw the old scrimmage in the Turl, and the proctor forcing his way through the crowd of "Town" just in time to receive the first charging gowman in his arms. That gowman was Tom, and as he thought of it, — with his eye still fixed on the enemy, — Tom smiled.

And then there was time for no more.

With teeth clenched so fiercely that it seemed as if they were never to be unlocked again, — with bosoms swelling with pent-up excitement, and every nerve quivering, — the dragoons had thundered over the intervening space, and flung themselves with a sickening crash against the foeman's flank. And as they met the enemy, every man in the 8th Dragoon Guards struck the one great blow — his first stroke in the war — that he had been dying to deal for ever so long. There were a good many empty saddles on the backs of Russian horses after that, I can tell you.

This was the noted charge of the Heavy Brigade.

The famous mad gallop of the light cavalry a little later in the day has had the fortune to win so much renown — as much for its faults as for its merits — that this gallant encounter I speak of has hardly been spoken of so often or so highly as it deserves. I am not desirous of detracting from the glory of the Light Brigade, purchased at the loss of so many brave fellows, and would not for a moment question the reputation sought and won literally in the cannon's mouth. But the heavy cavalry should have its meed of honor. Broken up into detachments, entangled in the lines of their own encampment, and meeting the full onward sweep of the enemy ere they themselves could push forward to meet them, our heavy troopers encountered and drove back in irretrievable confusion three times their own number. It was a glorious, a splendid sight for the allies, who, stationed on the heights, watched the contest

in the valley below as if it were a game of chess. What would not one give to have seen that sombre, massive column swoop down and swallow up our handful of men, and then, like a wave that collects its forces and flings itself on some rocky point, scatter and break before bravery insurmountable?

While I am writing this I cannot but remember there come warnings of a storm. It is useless to disguise the fact that we and certain of our neighbors (thanks to foolish scruples) have been clenching our fists and frowning at each other. Between nations, as between men, such demonstrations are not quickly or easily forgotten. I am inclined to think we remember a threat longer than a blow, and, indeed, believe the latter is the only means of removing the impression of the former. The two boys at school who are always saying to each other, "Ah, you do!" or "Just you hit me!" or "Touch me if you dare!" are the two boys who go on hating one another forever. The two who go off to a retired spot and have their little difference out in a muscularly Christian spirit learn to respect one another, and are not seldom the best and closest of friends afterwards. Do you think that two people who have been sometimes openly, sometimes tacitly or indirectly, taunting each other lately, are likely to make up the difference wholesomely without some blood-letting? I do not; and therefore it is that I read the page of modern history in which Cornet Martindale and the 8th Dragoon Guards are engaged with immense comfort and satisfaction.

"Ah," our fathers used to say, "look at Waterloo! How often was an overwhelming force hurled against our army, and yet we won! There are no such soldiers now." But when the hour came, our dainty lads left off lounging in the Row and waltzing the "Olga," and officered their men as only young English gentlemen could do; and our country boys left the plough-tail, shouldered the musket, and went to battle as cheerfully as ever they had gone whistling afield. The charge across the Alma and up the heights beyond, — the engagements of our Heavy and Light Brigades, — the resistance on the slopes of Inkermann, — these all tell the same story as Waterloo, — these record the hardihood and gallantry of Englishmen, rich or poor, low-born or noble; and when we read of these things we can well smile at all threats, — ay, and at all sneers, — and feel sure that when the hour arrives the old colors that waved above the Belgian cornfields and in the Crimean vineyards will float still, and above as noble

hearts and strong arms, wherever the scene of battle may be.

But we must not forget that, while we are talking about what may be hereafter, Tom Martindale and the 8th Dragoon Guards have crossed swords with the enemy for the first time.

Into the flank of the advancing column our brave fellows cut their way in steady line. They buried themselves in the ranks of the foe, and the superiority of numbers could not match the superiority of spirit. The huge body of Russian cavalry was shaken by the onset of this mere handful of brave men. It was not the weight of troops, but the individual gallantry of the soldiers, that reckoned here. As the Scotch Grays and the Enniskillens, swallowed up though they were in the column that poured upon them, were driving back their assailants, so the 4th and 8th Dragoon Guards broke up the ranks opposed to them by sheer pluck and dash. Officers and men alike fought like old Homeric heroes, — hand to hand, striking for England and for glory, every man a giant.

It was a lancer who met Tom in full career. Tom made a furious slash at the lance that severed its head, and then, having got so near his man as to have no play for his sword, struck him with the hilt in the face and knocked him over the crupper. Down with the sword again on the next lancer, who parried and returned a blow, which crashed down on Tom's helmet, and made a thousand sparks dance before his eyes, whereupon Tom darted a quick thrust at his enemy's throat, and so a second man went down, and he was prepared for the third, — a dragoon like himself this time. With him Tom exchanged two cuts, and then there is a tinkle and a crash, and Tom's sabre has snapped at the hilt. Tom flings the hilt at his enemy's head, draws a pistol from his holster, and blows his brains out.

"Here's a sword, sir," says some one hurriedly, and a private in his regiment riding on his left thrusts a Russian sabre into his hand. Only just in time, for here comes Tom's fourth foe.

A big dragoon, this last foe of Tom's, with a powerful horse and a tremendous reach with his big sword, which he swings as if it were a straw. That big sword is hissing through the air to descend on Tom's shoulder and bring his campaign to an abrupt termination, when the soldier who gave Tom the sabre, having in the interim settled accounts with another lancer, catches sight of his officer's peril. He snatches his pistol from the holster, and discharges it in

the big Russian's face. He is too late to stop the blow, but just in time to render it powerless to kill. The big sword falls, however, with crushing weight on Tom's right shoulder, and just at the same moment a Russian lancer makes a thrust at him. Tom parries feebly with his disabled arm, and the lance, missing a vital part, tumbles him off his horse. He comes to the ground with a terrific thud, and the lancer, riding over him, makes an amiable attempt to spit him as he goes, but fails. And then external matters cease for a while to have any interest for Cornet Martindale of the 8th Dragoon Guards.

CHAPTER IX.

DUN CLOUDS.

THE time at length arrived when Edward Harding's amiable trustees, Messrs. Wisby and Slowman, saw fit to pay off his Oxford debts, or rather the list of them which had been sent in by James. For this purpose they employed an accountant, who charged a pleasant percentage, and was an expensive and by no means necessary addition to the outlay. From him the tradespeople learned in some mysterious way that if they wanted to be paid they had better not give Master Ted any very extensive credit in future.

Now, unfortunately, since the day when that list had been transmitted to the old fogies by James, with a letter entreating their speedy attention, Edward had had ample leisure to heap up around him another pile of debt. At the news conveyed by the accountant this enlivening avalanche swept down upon the lad, and he was in a few short hours inundated with requests for "little accounts." What could he do?

He wrote first to his trustees, having now gathered the courage of despair. The answer he received was conclusive. They had no more money to give him!

It had been bad enough to be dunned when he knew he had the means of paying. But now, when he was informed that the exchequer was quite dry, the trouble and anxiety became terrible. Day after day the applications became more frequent and more urgent.

At last came the fatal period when Edward's door was besieged by expectant creditors. Representatives of every conceivable trade were to be seen hovering about his "oak." They were used to that sort of work, and mounted guard over his entrance with a dogged determination, which seemed assured that sooner or later the garrison must give in.

Unhappy garrison ! How it fumed and fretted at this beleaguering ! With blinds drawn down in front, with food furtively supplied at the back windows that looked into the little quad in the rear of the old quad, the garrison intrenched itself, cutting hall and lectures on the score of ill health. And, indeed, it was suffering from a disorder which was extremely prevalent among lads at Oxford.

But this sort of thing could not go on forever, as the patient duns well knew. A time arrived when Edward grew desperate at the perpetual annoyance, and dressing himself in his best clothes, and with an assumed air of comfort and carelessness, strode out from the besieged doorway into the midst of the knot of patient attendants in waiting.

Then rose a very Babel of entreaties and threats, to all of which Edward could only reply that it was not convenient to pay this term,—that he hoped to settle them all next term—that—that—in short, that—anything!—in order just to get rid of his tormentors and clear the passage in front of his rooms. With dissatisfied murmurs and black looks the group of expectants scattered slowly. And then began a new form of siege.

Messrs. Sawkins and Hilvester, having had Mr. Ticker's books placed in their hands for the settlement of outstanding accounts, would be glad to receive the sum of blank pounds, blank shillings, and blank pence, due from Mr. Harding, of Denb. Coll., without delay. Mr. Pincham had been directed by Messrs. Duncan and Candone to apply for their little account, which he would therefore feel obliged to Mr. Harding to remit to him with the least possible delay. And so on, and so on !

In a short time these applications assumed a curt and peremptory form. The money was to be paid in a few days,—period named,—or the writers would be compelled to take further steps to insure an immediate settlement of their claims.

Finally, Edward became acquainted with the signature of Sconger, the proctor of the Vice-Chancellor's Court, wherein, so that functionary informed him, he would be sued at the instigation of Mr. Blank, and Mr. This, and Mr. That, unless he promptly liquidated the debts he had contracted with them.

Edward went to see Sconger, in hopes of talking the matter over with him. Sconger was a member of the University, and Edward thought it possible he might not be a bad sort of fellow. But he was grievously mistaken in his estimate. Sconger was a

mangy little cad, who had somehow contrived to crawl through a university career as a taberdar at Queen's, or a scholar at Worcester, or in some equally noble capacity. Now he was a sort of tradesman's bully, and made matters as unpleasant as he could in the Vice-Chancellor's Court to men who had been seduced into extravagance by the very creditors who clamored so for a settlement of their accounts.

Edward was treated by Sconger with all the low insolence of an ill-bred dog in office. The creature who made his living out of the misfortunes of University men was not even decently grateful to him for giving him employment. Edward waxed furious, and, turning upon the little sneak, gave him so severe a handling that the proctor shrank into himself, but vowed inwardly to persecute the lad all the more for his pluck ! Edward's course was a courageous one, but, I fear, hardly a wise one.

A day or two after his interview he saw reason to prepare for lengthened siege. He laid in a good stock of provisions, liquid and solid, and served out a supply of tobacco sufficient to last out a protracted beleaguement.

"Keen !"

"Yes, sir."

"Put on an agar for me. Tell the Dean I am suffering from something or other—a bilious attack. That's about the truth of it, Keen, isn't it ? The table looks like it, don't it ?" and he pointed to a large and splendid assortment of bills which adorned his breakfast-table.

"Yes, sir, it do."

"And then, Keen, sport the oak, and don't let in a soul, for I'm expecting a citation from the Vice-Chancellor's Court."

"Thank you, sir."

Before long one of the bedels—the officers who carry the silver maces in front of the Vice-Chancellor as he goes forth on his duties, and are therefore styled "silver pokers," as certain court dignitaries are spoken of as "sticks"—made his appearance in quad. Ted noted his arrival, peeping round the blind, and began to chuckle heartily when he heard him vainly battering his knuckles against the outer door.

The "poker" was in no hurry. Mr. Harding, he thought to himself, would have done reading shortly, and then he would come out and be served with the little slip of paper summoning him before the Court of the Vice-Chancellor to show cause why he did not pay to a certain tradesman a sum of money, to wit, any amount you like, for goods supplied to him.

But Mr. Harding was in no hurry either.

He ensconced himself securely, and lived like a fighting-cock, eating, drinking and smoking to his heart's content, and sallying out at twelve o'clock at night for air and exercise, which he took in the green quadrangle in front of the new buildings.

In this way three days passed, at the end of which time I fancy both bedel and undergrad were pretty well tired of the little game. But the bedel got wearied first, and relinquished the attempt, not without first expressing to Keen, who feigned deep sympathy with him, that he really rather admired the gentleman's obstinacy, adding that it was the first time he had ever been so effectually barred out.

The bedel once gone and fairly out of sight, Ted rushed into quad and executed a wild impromptu *pas d'exclasse*, to the admiration of many of the men of Denb. Coll., who had watched the progress of the siege with deep interest, and cheered Ted lustily for defeating the common enemy so effectually.

"And now, Keen, I'm off to your place at once."

"Thank you, sir."

"As soon as I'm gone, pack my portmanteau and bring it over, and go round to Bars and tell him to send a Hansom round, to take me to the station in time for the last train to town."

"Yes, sir. Thank you, sir."

Thereupon Edward stole out of college and took refuge at Keen's residence, a little house in Denbigh Street, just close to the college, where he waited until the evening, and then, under cover of darkness, and in a Hansom, rattled off to the station, took a ticket to Paddington, and was speedily steaming away to town at a pace which set the pursuit of all the bedels in the University at defiance.

On reaching "the little village," as the metropolis was affectionately called at Oxford, Edward proceeded to the Tavistock, where he took a bed and left his luggage, and then sallied out, though at rather a late hour, to seek amusement until bedtime. Bedtime turned out ultimately to be about dawn, when the market was full of dewy cabbages and busy porters, and when the cherries began to arrive and were sold amid much bustle and noise, to the great disgust of Edward, whose chances of sleep became remarkably slender as the business grew brisker.

It was about midday when Edward rose and took a cosy breakfast, after which he sallied out and bent his way citywards in order to have an interview with his guardians. He had written the night before to

request Mr. Slowman to meet him at Mr. Wisby's bank.

He found the two old fogies in a very exalted frame of mind. They pointed out to him that as he came of age in a few months, they would rather not be bothered any more about him. As for these present liabilities, he must plead "under age," and then do what he could when he reached "years of discretion,"—and Mr. Wisby laid a spiteful emphasis on the word "discretion."

Edward tried to make them understand that such a plea could not be put forward without insuring the immediate withdrawal of his name from the books of Denbigh College. The Master of Denbigh, on the strength of having formed one of the Oxford Commission, in which he had worked diligently for the Whigs with an eye to a future bishopric, was a stern disciplinarian, and began reforms in his own college by punishing severely any peccadilloes he discovered. I am bound to add that this was the only reform he ever attempted, and that in every other respect his college was no better managed than any other in the University.

This sketch of the master, boldly dashed in by the unprejudiced hand of Edward, had no effect on the minds of Messrs. Wisby and Slowman,—always supposing they were inconvenienced with such articles.

He must extricate himself as he best could from difficulties into which he had plunged of his own accord, after having been extricated once already; he ought to have learned wisdom from experience. Their very onerous and unsatisfactory task would be brought to an end in a short time, and in the interim they declined to incur any responsibilities. They could do nothing.

Thereupon Ted fired up, and expressed his opinion of their mismanagement of his affairs in pretty round terms. I regret to add that he so forgot himself as to say something about the hardship of a gentleman's having to talk about such matters as a university career and college debts—things which they knew no more about than about polite society—to a stockbroking civic and the cashier of a humdrum old banking-house.

Thus shaking the dust off his feet against his trustees, he left the place in disgust, and flinging himself into a Hansom, bade the driver "go like fury to the Ordnance Office, where Mr. Martindale, senior, was Permanent Assistant Under-Secretary."

"Mr. Martindale?" said a functionary to whom Edward addressed himself on reach-

ing the office, and who was lounging in a comfortable chair before the hall fire, — "Mr. Martindale? Jawkins, do you know where Mr. Martindale sits?"

"No, but I think it must be Mr. Battlesby's branch," said the person addressed, without turning his head from the window, from whence he was surveying the outer world.

"Mr. Battlesby's branch, sir," said the first speaker, half turning to Edward. "Keep to the right, and inquire of the messenger in the room just opposite."

Edward followed these directions, and made his desire to see Mr. Martindale known to a very dapper-looking man who was reading the paper in the messenger's room.

"Mr. Martindale, sir? Don't know the gent. Stop a moment, though. Try Mr. Spoffle's room, sir. Other end of the building. Here, Parker," addressing a boy who was passing with a bundle of papers, "take this gentleman to Mr. Spoffle's room, No. 26; and look here, as you come back, just go to the lunch-room and bring me a pint of half-and-half."

Convoyed by Parker, Edward reached the room of Mr. Spoffle, who was engaged in eating his lunch, and did not seem to like being interrupted. He directed Edward to Room 34 at the top of the staircase. Up went Edward, rather tired by this time, and wishing Under-Secretaries were a little more accessible. On reaching No. 34 he tapped at the door, and, entering, asked for Martindale. Thereupon a very pink young gentleman, blushing profusely, rose, and, announcing that he was the party in question, hustled Ted out on the landing, and asked him his business in a manner which implied that he did not expect it to be pleasant. Relieved by Ted's explanation that he could not be the Mr. Martindale he wished to see, the young gentleman retired into the room again, disclaiming all knowledge of any other Martindale in the building, but saying he thought there was "a chap of that name at the Horse Guards."

Confused by this encounter, Ted lost his way in endeavoring to retrace his steps, and eventually found himself where he had started, — in the presence of the messenger who had sent him to Mr. Spoffle.

The messenger, having finished the *Times*, and drunk his half-and-half, was inclined to be more communicative now. Edward explained that the Mr. Martindale he wished to see was an elderly man, the Assistant-Under-Sec—

"Why had n't you said the Onnable Mr. M., or asked for the Under-Secretary, sir, at once? You'd 'a' saved yourself a deal

of trouble. Step this way. We don't never send no one to him unless they apply special. It would n't do, you see, sir."

Ted did n't see, but it was not worth while to discuss the question, so he followed the man, who took him along a passage or two, and then handed him over to another messenger.

"This is the gentleman who attends on the Onnable Mr. M., sir. Calvert, this gentleman wishes to see the Under-Secretary."

"Official or private?" asked Mr. Calvert.

Edward stated that his business was of a private nature, and gave his card, with which Calvert hobbled off, making no attempt to conceal the fact that he was anxious to learn who Edward was; indeed, it would have been absurd on his part to attempt to conceal his perusal of the card, for having, as well as a game leg, a blind eye and very short sight, he had to hold the pasteboard quite close to the better organ of vision, in a manner that reminded Ted of a magpie looking into a marrow-bone.

In a few minutes Calvert returned, and, bidding Edward follow him, led the way to the Under-Secretary's apartment. Mr. Martindale welcomed Edward warmly, and begged him to take a seat. "His son had written to him about his friend Mr. Harding, and he was delighted to make his acquaintance."

"Had Mr. Martindale heard from Tom?" Edward inquired.

"Yes, two days ago; the letter had been delayed on the way. He was well then, and just settling in his hut. The regiment had not been into action yet," Mr. Martindale answered, and then begged to know what he could do to be of service for Edward, who must, he added, pardon his coming to the point so directly, as they were very busy, the whole office being worked off its legs almost by the pressure consequent on the war.

Edward told his story to Mr. Martindale as briefly as he could. The Under-Secretary shook his head sympathetically at all the unpleasant passages, and deprecatingly when Edward pitched into his guardians, for the Assistant Under-Secretary was a constituted authority himself.

Edward wound up his story by saying that he should be very grateful if Mr. Martindale could obtain him any employment in connection with the army in the Crimea.

"Active service, eh, Mr. Harding? Well, I can tell you there's nothing like it to divert the mind from unpleasant trains of thought. You would n't like to come and do my duties for a while, would you? I'll

guarantee you won't have any time to think of anything but the work."

Edward laughed, and said he feared he should be a very inadequate substitute.

"Well, well, perhaps you would n't find out in a day what I've been learning all my life. But now about your wish to join our forces in the Crimea. Are you a good horseman? — would you prefer cavalry or infantry? You'd better say the latter, there 'll be less difficulty."

Edward said he should be proud to serve his country in any way, on horse or on foot.

"Do you know anything of drill? No! That's unfortunate, but we must try and manage that. If I were you I would go to the barracks and engage a sergeant to come and teach you your drill at once."

Edward thanked him for the advice, and asked how soon he was likely to be sent abroad after obtaining his commission.

"As soon as you like, my dear sir."

"The sooner the better, for I am in perpetual fidget about my Oxford bills."

"Ah, well! there shall be no more delay than is absolutely necessary."

Ted expressed his gratitude in the warmest terms, and said he would not interfere with Mr. Martindale's valuable labors any longer. So they shook hands and parted, the Under-Secretary plunging at once into a paper containing an intricate discussion on the desirability of having two buttons instead of four on the sleeves on the artillery undress jacket, while Edward went off to the Tavistock to write a long letter to his brother James, and tell him of his intention to enter the army.

At the commencement of the second week of his sojourn in London, Edward had the delight of seeing himself gazetted as Ensign in the 203d Foot, "Berkshire Rifles," and soon after received orders to report himself at the depot, whence he was to proceed with a detachment to the East.

CHAPTER X.

CYPRESS AND ORANGE-BLOSSOM.

THE great and prosperous city of Liverchester was almost deserted now. The palatial residences in the fine broad streets were left in charge of servants, and the wealthy merchants were away at the seaside or abroad, — had fled in every direction, in short, to escape from the pestilence.

It was a strange idea, this Exodus of Wealth. You see, the great men had been erecting their grand houses, and damming

back into narrower space day by day the swarming poverty of the town. It was a sort of siege, — Wealth pushing forward its works, and Poverty falling back on its citadel of reeking alleys. But at last came a sortie of the beleagured garrison. With that black flag I spoke of a little while since waving above them, and commanded by the grisly form of Death, who, marshalling the regiments of coffins, led them out against the besiegers, the army of Poverty marched out and displayed itself, perhaps for the first time, to Wealth and Comfort. Whereupon the besiegers struck their tents, and left Poverty in possession of the field.

And there were local papers and penny-a-liners, who, for lack of more interesting particulars, would now and then shock propriety with a paragraph headed "Shocking Destitution in Back Lane," or "Death from Want in Outfights Alley," with a vivid description of the scene. Sometimes a refractory jurymen at a coroner's inquest would prevent things from being done decently and quietly, or some very insane person, a curate or a doctor, on occasion, would make a stir about the inhumanity or negligence of the workhouse authorities.

Woe betide the reporter who reported! For the good people of Liverchester would intimate to his employer that they would be compelled to stop their subscriptions for the paper if these revolting instances of bad taste were repeated. Woe betide the jurymen who would not allow starvation to be huddled away into a pauper's grave without any fuss! For the good people of Liverchester made him a marked man, and his business suffered, his customers declining to deal with such a turbulent demagogue. Woe betide the curate who remonstrated, and interfered to save the bodies as well as the souls of his famished flock! No more invitations to tea or dinner, no more slippers and braces, no more money for charities, no more attendance at church. The good folks of Liverchester could not countenance a clergyman who neglected his ministerial duties and interfered with the secular arm. Woe betide the medical man who protested that the only things to do his sick people any good were medicines he could not prescribe and make up, — food, air, and cleanliness! If he were the cleverest doctor alive, he would nevermore be called in by the good folks of Liverchester, who could not employ a physician so constantly visiting among low people, for how could they tell what contagious diseases he might not bring into their houses?

So the wealthy Liverchestrians ignored Misery and Poverty. They stopped up the

rat-holes and left the vermin to die in them. But, unluckily, a dead rat becomes offensive. An odor not of ottar of roses diffuses itself through the most splendid apartment when a deceased rodent lies rotting behind the arras. And just in this way the kept-down and crushed-out poverty of Liverchester made its presence felt. There was the upheaval of the revolution. Gaunt scarecrows fell down dead outside splendid houses. Long, ragged, walking funerals crept by like black noisome worms among the glittering equipages in the main streets. Some selfish, disrespectful wretches actually had the audacity to communicate the disorder to their betters by venturing to breathe the same air with them. Others, dying upon fetid trusses of straw, having no stick of property to make disposal of, bequeathed the only thing they had to call their own — sickness unto death — to their wealthy neighbors, and not very willing heirs.

Then the revolution was at its height. Barricades of coffins in the streets, manned by deadly vapors, met the gaze of the affrighted citizens on every side, and so in a few days the city was abandoned; "Plague, Pestilence, and Famine" was written up legibly on the walls; and Death was declared Dictator.

Throughout this fight James Harding took his place in the foremost ranks. Cholera was mowing down the people on every side. There was no seaside refuge for the poor with whom he had to deal. While the children of the affrighted merchant who had sped to Scarborough were watching the green waves breaking into a white smoke of foam on the shingle, these unhappy ones, abandoned in that desolate city, were watching — with what anxious eyes! — the ebb and flow of the tide-line of eternity, — were noting, with an awful sense of God's power, the rise and fall of the green earth-waves in the churchyard, which, now that plague-pits were dug and filled so rapidly, seemed to surge on like rollers that break upon the shore where the ocean is vast, and the wind swells up to fill the watery sails of the incoming Atlantic.

It was a steaming hot day in June, when James had been reading the burial-service over one of those ghastly pits, that he met Prudence Heath again. White, and thinner even than before, the brave little woman was still at her work, carrying comfort and kindness into desolate places, and making poor creatures who had been spiritually as well as physically neglected begin to think about angels.

The cemetery where James and Prudence met was situated on a hill overlooking the

city of Liverchester, — a delicious green garden, where it seemed, until the plague-pits began to yawn there, that sleep must be lovely indeed under such green turf, with a still, deep sky above, and the birds chirping and twittering on all sides.

James was tired with a night's watch by a death-bed, and had seated himself on a flat tomb, letting what little air there was fan his feverish forehead. He rose as Prudence approached.

"Ah, Miss Heath, who would have expected to find you here? But I am glad that you do not neglect to catch a breath or two of purer air than we get in this city, though nowadays even this lovely spot is not the best place for a walk."

"How do you do, Mr. Harding? You look very tired."

"I am, rather, but the air is very refreshing on the hill here."

"I never neglect my walks, you know, because they are absolutely necessary. If one is to persevere in this work, — and especially after two illnesses like mine, — one must overlook no means of strength and health."

"You are right. But I really don't think this is the best place for a walk now. The number of burials is very large every day."

"I did not come here for a walk, Mr. Harding. I came to visit my mother's grave. Until this year I have always kept it planted with flowers, but my illness and my work have prevented my doing so now."

"We shall have a little respite before long, I hope, for the sickness must slacken if only because there are so few left to fall its victims, and then, Miss Heath, you must let me assist you in restoring that grave —"

"O, I am so pleased to think you agree with me about planting flowers. The vicar told me that he thought it was not becoming to make graves into flower-beds."

"Some people's minds are so very matter-of-fact. But I think flowers the most fitting memorials of the dead. I would far rather be buried among them than be placed under some huge marble monument. It always seems to me when people erect a tombstone that they employ strangers to honor their dead, and that when the piece of mason-work is set up they have done with it once and forever. But a memorial that consists of flowers must be watched and tended and renewed."

"Yes, that is true. I have always loved the old motto, 'Lord, keep my memory green!' — it would be very fitting for such a grave. While I was lying ill, and the doctors gave me over, those words were

always haunting me in my half-delirious, half-unconscious moments."

As Prudence spoke they heard a child's voice crying very plaintively, "Mammy! mammy!"

"What can that be? A little one left behind by some of the mourners, perhaps. Let us find it."

James sprang to his feet and listened. The little sorrowful voice called again, and he followed the direction of the sound. A poor, ragged, dirty little girl about three years old was wandering through the graves, sobbing, and calling for its "mammy."

"Come here, little one," said Prudence, who had followed James. The child, who had gazed at the latter with some show of terror, was reassured by her kind face, which probably was not unfamiliar to this child inhabitant of the dark lanes and narrow courts. She sidled up to Prudence, peeping up from under her ragged elf locks, and at last nestling up close beside the kindly little woman and burying her face in her dress.

"What is it, little one?" asked Prudence, stooping down and caressing the child. "Has mammy brought you here and lost you?"

The child shook her head, and at the mention of "mammy" her eyes filled with tears, and she sobbed out the cry very plaintively.

"Where is mammy, then?"

"She's up here. Mammy, mammy!"

"How do you know, my dear?"

"Mammy's been bad. She could n't get off the bed, and she is n't at home to-day, and Brother Jack told me she was here," was the answer, in very broken childish language, interrupted with many sobs.

Prudence looked significantly at James, and sighed. "Poor wee lamb, I'm afraid you won't find mammy!"

"I came to look for her," said the child. "Mammy! mammy!"

"Poor little thing!" said Prudence, her eyes filling with tears; "mammy is lying under the grass, I fear, Mr. Harding. What can we do with her?"

"Let us take her down into the town. She probably has some friends or relatives. At all events, we can find out where the brother is whom she speaks of."

"Yes, so we can. Here, little one, take my hand, and we'll try to find mammy. We sha' n't find her here. Shall we go and ask Brother Jack about her?"

The child's face brightened, and she nodded. Prudence took her hand and led the way towards the gates.

They had wandered from the path in their endeavors to find the girl, and were now making straight across the grass. As they neared the gates James saw with horror that they had come upon an open pit, in which the first layer of coffins had been already placed.

"Let us go round by that path, Miss Heath. It is not safe to venture too near these pits, and it is not a sight for you to look at. It is trying enough for a strong man."

"I would rather go on, — I wish just once to see." And she stepped up to the edge and gazed in.

"Poor things, swept down in ranks! This is very terrible, Mr. Harding. It makes one tremble to think that we are accountable for much of this."

"How do you mean?"

"O, not we personally, but the people who live in the city and allow ignorance and want to sow the seeds of such wholesale destruction as this. Ah, Mr. Harding," — she turned towards him, clasping her hands, with an expression of infinite sorrow and compassion in her face, — "these unhappy people! A little more care and love and teaching, a little less greed and avarice, might have averted the calamity. Good heavens! it is awful to think of men who can let their fellow-creatures die in herds like the beasts that perish."

"I pray heaven that the experience so dearly bought this time will not be thrown away!"

"It will, Mr. Harding. I know it. When once the alarm has subsided, things will go on in the old way, unless a few faithful workers continue to labor for these poor souls."

"That will I for one," said James, very solemnly.

"And I, if I be spared," said Prudence, looking up to heaven with a brave resignation in her quiet gray eyes.

"God grant it!" said James, fervently.

She turned to him and held out her hand. They were still standing by that great yawning pit, with the poor strayed child clinging to Prudence's dress and looking on in dumb wonderment.

"You will always let me be a friend, won't you, Mr. Harding?" she asked, holding out her hand to him frankly; "we might do much for these poor souls."

James bent over her hand reverently and raised it to his lips. There was nothing in the action but the admiration every true man would have felt for that angelic nature. Prudence did not misunderstand its meaning. And then James took courage, and a

secret source of hope and fear and strength which he had long hidden in his very inmost heart was unsealed. He took the hand in his more firmly, and looked into the honest, fearless gray eyes, which had such a tenderness in their glance that one thought to one's self, at the sight of it, "How that woman could love a man!"

"Prudence Heath, will you be the dearest friend on earth to me? Will you be the best and truest friend a man can have? — will you be my wife?"

"I will be your faithful and loving wife, James, till the day I die, if you think me worthy."

And that was all!

It seemed as if these two had known each other all their lives, and loved each other as long. The confession was surprised from them, yet each appeared prepared for it. In truth, they had in dark times they had gone through seen very much of one another, and each had learned to admire and respect the other's fine qualities. So when the time came they were not ashamed of their feelings, and had no question about their depth.

In this way Prudence and James plighted their troth, by the side of a yawning plague-pit, with that orphan child clinging to them.

"What a place to select for such a love passage!" I hear some one say. Why not select that spot? This man and woman were not talking romantic nonsense to each other. Theirs was no tinsel love born of waltzes and whisperings on the stairs. It was not nursed by moonlight wanderings in groves where the nightingales sobbed melody. It was not the untried, unstable love of boys and girls. Their affection had sprung of mutual respect and complete understanding of each other's characters. They were man and wife elect of sorrow and labor and the great truth of life. Their hands were united, their hearts were one, not to share unalloyed sunshine and dreams of fairyland, but to face the world and preserve against all cares and struggles one sacred spot where there should be always light and peace and calm, — the domestic hearth.

When they had plighted their troth, as I have told you, the two, leading the little stray child with them, walked down into Liverchester in silence, for the heart of each was full of solemn thoughts.

That night, when James Harding had finished his day's work and flung himself wearily on his bed, there was great happiness and a calm sense of reliant love which seemed to fill him with new strength and

open out a brighter prospect before him. So he fell asleep murmuring the name of the good woman he loved.

He little knew what Prudence Heath would have to suffer on his account. He had never troubled to inquire about her position, and satisfied himself with the belief that she was "a poor relation" of her wealthy guardian's. She dressed very quietly, and was allowed to do exactly as she liked, and he conjectured, therefore, that her doings were little regarded by her uncle, who, he believed, kept her out of charity. It was true that she had a good deal of money to give away, but he supposed that her uncle gave her a generous allowance, and that she gave it all to the poor. I fancy if James had known the real state of the case he would have been a little less easy of mind as he fell asleep, for of all things in the world that he had a horror of there was nothing he thought baser and more unworthy of a man than marriage for money.

When Prudence Heath went home, she sat down at once and wrote to her uncle, telling him all. Her uncle had fled with his family, like the rest of the prosperous people of Liverchester. He had tried to persuade Prudence to go with them, but she would not hear of it; and as it was his policy not to thwart her, she was allowed to remain at the family mansion, a large house in the main street of the city.

I will not attempt to describe the rage of her uncle when he found all his ingenious scheming shattered and dissipated at a word. He declared it was only what he ought to have expected when he let the girl go maundering about with a lot of poor young parsons, always on the lookout for money. He wrote her an angry letter, and came over in a few days in person to try to exert his authority; but it was all to no purpose. Prudence was as firm and unyielding as such a brave, good little woman could be in the face of wrong and injustice. Guardian and ward separated on very cold terms.

Prudence had purposely avoided meeting James again until after she had seen her guardian. The day after the stormy interview she wrote him a note asking him to call. He did so, and then learned for the first time that Prudence Heath was an heiress.

"Why, you don't look delighted at all! And I thought you had most likely heard of it."

"Not a word, — and I'm glad I did n't, for I don't think I could have loved you if I had known it, Prue."

"Won't you love me if I am an heiress, James?"

"I can't help it now. It's too late to resist; but I wish I had known it before; I can't bear rich women as a rule."

Prudence got up from the table where she was sitting, and walked across to James, who was standing moodily at the window. He was mortified at the discovery, for he felt that his motives would be misconstrued on all sides.

Prudence came up to him and laid her two hands in his, and then looking into his face with her sweet smile and her frank, honest gray eyes, said, —

"Take a penniless girl for your wife, then, James; for my guardian disapproves of the match, and by my father's will, although he cannot, of course, prevent my marrying, he can deprive me of my fortune."

Then James got frightened on another score.

"Prue, do you think you do wisely to sacrifice all this for a poor parson? You have been used to every comfort, you have never known what it is to want money or anything which money commands. Reflect, — think of what you lose!"

She laid her head on his shoulder, and, looking up trustfully, said, —

"Shan't I have you, dear?"

There was no answering that, — so he folded her to his heart.

CHAPTER XI.

LOVE IN A HUT.

EDWARD HARDING'S sword was fated not to be fleshed in the Crimean campaign. When he reached Balaklava with his detachment he found the war over and the troops recalled. And then he learned that Tom Martindale was quartered with the 8th Dragoon Guards on the heights, a few hours' ride from the harbor, that he had recovered from his wounds and was in high feather once more. So Ensign Harding handed over his detachment, and asked leave of his commanding officer, in order to go over to the scene of the war. The leave was granted at once, and next day Edward was careering along on an uneasy Russian pony, under the guidance of a Turk, a little lithe, wiry fellow, who swung along afoot over the ground at a pace which our friend could hardly persuade his sorry nag to emulate. And it was hardly surprising that the poor beast was not good in his paces, for, as Ted learnt afterwards, the wretched

animal could have found but little to sustain strength on, having been turned out to pick up a living where there was nothing, or next to nothing, to graze upon, except tent-pegs and cannon-balls. Ted, on hearing the explanation of his horse's condition from Tom Martindale, declared that that accounted for his sensations during that uncomfortable ride. He vowed he could feel the points of the tent-pegs through the creature's sides, and attributed his frequent stumblings to the weight of undigested cannon-balls.

He was not sorry when the tents of the 8th Dragoon Guards came in sight. He dismissed Buono Johnny with a handsome fee that made the little fellow's eyes sparkle in a way that would have shaken the belief of those who talk about the stolidity of the Mussulman. A vigorous and unremitting application of his sword-sheath to the pony's flanks elicited a progressive movement bordering on a canter, and so Edward Harding jolted on towards the camp, reached it, and inquiring his way to Cornet Martindale's tent of a trooper engaged in repairing a very dilapidated jacket, had it pointed out to him, and the next minute gladly drew rein in front of an edifice of combined clay, canvas, and boarding.

"Tom — Tom Martindale!" shouted Edward.

"Hullo!" was bellowed forth from the interior, and the next instant a figure appeared in the doorway.

Edward Harding could not believe his eyes. Before leaving England Tom had been photographed in all the first flush of becoming regimentals. Where was the dapper, hale officer in whom Edward had found some likeness to "Old Tom Martindale of Denb. Coll.," despite that peculiar habit which photographs have of making you as unlike yourself as it is possible for a likeness to be?

The figure in the doorway of the hut was a very dark brown unkempt individual, with a tawny beard, a tattered set of regimentals, and a most irregular short black clay pipe. This was even less like the original Tom Martindale of "Oxford College" than the photograph. But there was no mistaking the voice.

"By Jove, Ted, I'm glad to see you."

"Ain't I glad to see you, Tom!"

So the one came out of the tent-door, and the other scrambled off the horse, which seemed, like a cane chair, to recover itself as soon as his weight was removed. The two old friends met and grasped hands. It was no long, ostentatious greeting; there was no hugging, and as for kissing, that was quite out of the question. They just

gave a short, warm grip, and the freemasonry of old and tried friendship did the rest, — if I may except a brief double shuffle cut by Tom as soon as he and Ted were within the tent.

"How about the horse, Tom?"

"I have n't got one — chiefly because I don't use towels, finding the sun (when one gets it) do the drying cheaper."

"Nonsense, I mean my horse."

"When did you send him? I have n't seen him. I dare say he has been taken for the public service, especially if he was a good 'un, for it's a rarish article."

"Don't be a donkey, Tom; I mean the one I came here upon."

"O, is that a horse? I beg a thousand pardons. I took him for a Russian pony, half donkey and half cat, with a touch of the pig in his temper and the hippopotamus in his paces."

"Well, it is a Russian pony, I suppose, Tom, since you must be so particular."

"O, I thought my eyes could not deceive me. But why this anxiety about the — the noble steed, if you like, as you seem a little proud of him, to judge from your deep interest in him?"

"What's to be done with him? Have you a shed or anything of that sort?"

"Divvle a bit, yer honor! But there's a truss or so of hay round the corner, and unless I am inexcusably ignorant of the habits and tastes of the animals of this delightful region, I guess you'll find him outside with his attention particularly directed to that snack. And he'll stop there until he has eaten his way out at the other end. Bless you, Ted," he continued, dropping his bantering tone, "he'll be safe not to stir from there, — he won't want any halter, — that is, unless it is so long since he saw hay that he does not recognize it, in which case he will take himself to his usual provender, tent-pegs and twenty-four-pounders."

And then followed the conversation about the diet of horses in the Crimea to which I have already alluded.

These two young fellows had not seen one another for a long time. They had gone through troubles — and one of them had been near death's door — since they last met. But like true English lads, they kept the demonstration of their feelings carefully choked off, and laughed and chaffed, — and felt deeply all the time.

What was the most natural thing for the old chums to do first of all, think you? Why, they sat down and smoked a pipe, and presently Tom produced a bottle of beer, and they began by and by to chat over old times and the story of their lives

since they were last together in the ~~dam~~ old "rooms in the old quad." Each, you remember, had the history of a ~~siege~~ ~~to~~ relate. Tom's description of the ~~siege~~ of Sebastopol would perhaps to the world at large seem the more important, but he — and I believe Ted too — enjoyed far more the recital of the latter's blockade in his rooms, of the final defeat of the silver poker, and the discomfiture of Sconger, the proctor of the Vice-Chancellor's court.

The interior of Tom's hut was by no means so uncomfortable as you would have been led to expect by the aspect of the exterior. It had plenty of furs and warm wraps spread about, and there were a couple of roughly made lounges of iron and canvas, and a long chest which formed a kind of sofa-bed with the aid of a mattress and a pile of blankets. Edward expressed his surprise and admiration at the snug look of the place.

"Yes, — and by Jove, Ted," said the cornet, "it's mainly owing to little Mary. She's a regular little trump, upon my soul she is! When the news of our privations out here during the winter first reached England, the good little thing set to work, — ran up some comforters and mittens and all sort of dodges for keeping one warm, in no time, spent, I'm afraid, all her money in blankets and all that kind of thing, not to mention creature-comforts, — packed 'em up and sent 'em off, — and, by Jove, took such trouble about their going, that I got 'em long before my respected governor, who's a very good chap in his way, had had time to tell his man to order the housekeeper to send some one to the outfitters and direct them to take the very earliest opportunity of sending me a regular Canadian outfit."

"She is a dear little girl, Tom."

"Yes, — and what am I to do? What can a fellow do in return for such kindness and thoughtfulness, Ted? You know how she has to slave away to get her money, — and yet I'll stake my life she spent every penny of it, and more too, perhaps, to send these things off to me. I declare I felt like a robber when I got them! I know she must be wanting money because of her having sent these things. Yet I dare not, cannot, should not, be brute enough to send her any, though I have lots of tin here that I can't do anything with."

"No, of course you could n't."

"Not yet, that is. For I have made my mind up to one thing. As soon as I get back to England, come weal or woe, if the governor rages, — and I'm most grieved to think of annoying him, — I'll make that good little girl my wife, and then whatever money

"I have shall be here, though it won't be such, I fancy, for I expect the old boy will go through that extraordinary surgical operation known to the scientific as cutting one off with a shilling. I shall be curious to see the amputation, but I can't help thinking I could observe it to better advantage in the character of a spectator purely."

"Tom, you beggar, you're just the same mad-brained donkey as ever. Can't you be serious for five minutes? Have you thought this over sufficiently, and are you sure you are doing the best for both?"

"Do you mean that I might find some better way of rewarding such affection and self-sacrifice than the presenting her with a worthless fellow like myself? Well, I agree with you, but then it is what would make her happy, I believe, — mind, I'm not defending her taste. If Pacha Martindale Ali were to say to the Moon-faced Pearl of the Feringhees, 'Speak; what reward wilt thou have? even to two thirds of my kingdom it shall be thine,' the Moon-faced Pearl would answer, 'If you please, I'll take that young cornet of the 8th Dragon Guards who has a foxy beard and a dilapidated collar-bone.' And I don't see what the Pacha Tommartindale Ali could do but present the M. F. P. with the party in question, — he could not even bowstring him first as he deserved, and even though he were persuaded, as I am, that he would be really enhancing the value of the reward. There, my parable is ended. Give me the beer, — tropical language naturally makes one a little dry."

"Well, Tom, if you find your pay won't support yourself and wife, you can write for a comic paper occasionally, or take your leave about Christmas and employ it in acting in a pantomime, for I never knew a fellow with such a lot of fun and good spirits always on supply under the most adverse circumstances!"

"Ah, you were always rather an even-tempered, steady-going chap, Ted. But that is a mistake, — up and down hill is better for a horse than a dead level, remember that! But now, as I have given you my love-story, perhaps you won't mind obliging me with a return of the killed and missing in the engagement between you and Emily Prior."

Edward Harding's face lengthened.

"You're a cheerful fellow for a lover of several years' standing, Ted! You don't seem at all delighted at the mention of that beloved name. What has happened? Does the paternal insist on your succeeding him in the buttery business if you would wed his heiress? Or does he refuse her to any one who has n't a gold tap to his castle, — I beg pardon, — quite a slip, — tassel to his

cap; no allusion to the old boy's beer intended in the mention of tap."

"Go on, Tom. You're likely to learn if you go on talking nineteen to the dozen in that way."

"I am immediately silence on a monument grinning at sorrow! Now divulge."

"Very well, then, you must know, a few days after you left Oxford, old P. turned up according to predictions. It unfortunately happened that he selected for his visit the morning after the boating supper, when there had been some fun going, our boat having bumped up to three during the races. I was a little out of sorts, and was taking a contemplative tankard of beer in your rooms, to which I had retired as being garrets, and therefore more unfrequented than my ground-floors. There came a gentle tap at the door, which I took to be the laundress, and sang out, 'Come in,' accordingly; whereupon I walked old Prior, and at once tackled me on the subject of my intentions. For a moment they were more like pitching him out of the window than anything else."

"But on reflection you remembered that it was not likely that one or two of your duns or old Sconger would be underneath, so it was n't worth while being hung for so few. Well, it would have been wasteful."

"Exactly so! You're a diviner, Thomas. But besides that I reflected that anyhow I must get the girl out of the scrape, cost what it might. So I told him that I was a poor man, without any expectations beyond my own industry —"

"Of which you presented him at that moment a very fine sample. Good!"

"But that I was much attached to his daughter," continued Edward, without heeding the interruption, "and that, if he would permit it, I wished to be considered as her accepted suitor. He grumbled about long engagements, different spheres, slight expectations, poverty, doubt of our knowing our real feelings, not unmingled with threats of appeals to the higher powers. Now just at that time I hoped, as you know, to scramble through my difficulties, and an appeal to the higher powers, by resulting probably in rustication, would have been immediate and unavoidable smash. So a selfish anxiety for my own safety giving an additional force to my generous wish to shield the girl made my eloquence so astonishingly persuasive that the old boy at last consented with a very bad grace."

"Do I, then, behold before me the — But no, by Jove, Ted, that is no subject to joke about. How the deuce can you get out of it?"

"I don't know any more than the dead. The only comfort to be derived from my smash at Oxford is the hope that it will in some way conduce to a breaking off of the engagement. I must own, too, that of late I had not been able to feign ardent attachment quite so consistently. You know, when it comes to writing a love-letter daily one begins to think Rowland Hill, after all, was not such a benefactor of his species, — and then one really begins to run dry of subjects."

"You should do as the parsons do, — write a letter as they do a sermon, for every day, and then, when it has come to the end of the year, turn round and begin again. It would n't be noticed, I assure you. The most devout and constant worshippers never see through the sermon subterfuge, and I don't think the most affectionate correspondent would discover you."

"I only hope that Emily, poor girl, is beginning to forget me, so that when the time comes it won't cause her much pain. Upon my soul, Tom, I feel an awful brute at times!"

"Poor dear! But be comforted, you woman-killer, — you irresistible Adonis! A little bird of my acquaintance — God bless its kind little heart! — has whispered in my ear, and I have a notion that Emily's heart is not likely to be broken at the notion of losing her Edward."

"What do you mean, Tom?"

"To tell you plainly, then, Mary told me before I left England that she had reason to believe Emily did not care a bit about you, — that she thought it was a good catch to get hold of a university man, and did n't know you were going a cropper. When Mary told me this, she said she believed you did not care more for Emily than Emily did for you, but that you fancied she was desperately fond of you, and, feeling yourself committed, were too honorable to throw her over. And, what is more, that dear little girl gave me leave to say this to you at any time when the fetters were beginning to chafe, and you were, in my opinion, prepared to hear it."

"No, Tom, it won't do. It's very kind of you, and it was thoughtful of Mary Freshfield, but I think I know better. You know I have n't much opinion of women's judgment in these matters, and you neither of you can know what I do. I wish I could believe it, but it is impossible. It would be cowardly to do so."

"Well, my dear old boy, you must go your own way. But if you ever find out that what I say is right, ask Mary's pardon

mentally for doubting her power of gauging Emily's character."

"That I will, Tom."

"She's the best little girl in the world, Ted. When I was down at hospital with my wound, her kind face haunted my dreams, and so she was the best nurse I had. I'll tell you what, old boy, when you lie for a long time, as I did, just on the narrow strand between life and death, you see things very differently, and value things the world values very lightly, and think little of things the world estimates highly. What does it matter to me that my relations cut me and turn up their noses at me for marrying Mary? I suppose that won't kill me, and as long as I live I shall have a home with the blessing of that woman to make it all that a hovel needs to make it a home. By Jove, Ted, when I went slap-dash at the Russian column in the valley down yonder, I did n't feel in the least shadow of a funk, but went at it as I should have charged the cads down the Corn, about a year before at Oxford. And, mind you, that charge of our Heavy Brigade was smart fighting. I have n't been in any considerable scrimmage since, — only a little skirmishing with Cossacks, — but even in those slight affairs, though I did not funk, I confess I felt a sort of hope that I might survive, and not lose the happiness I looked forward to in the future with my Mary. It was not fear exactly, but I'm afraid it was not unlike it."

"You're a lucky fellow, Tom. You love and are loved by a splendid woman, and you've no ticks or duns, and you have seen service and been respectably wounded, not disfigured, in the service of your country. Look at me! I've no money and heaps of debts; I'm tied to a woman whom I do not love, and whose loving me only makes matters worse by making my escape impossible. And then, to finish it up, when I come out to the Crimea in the hopes of getting shot and dying gloriously, lo and behold! peace is proclaimed, and I must just go back to barracks, and thence to the debtors' jail."

"Come, Ted, cheer up! You must n't get in the dumps yet. While I've a sixpence you shall share it, as we used to share in the old Oxford days, and it will go hard indeed if you can't be pulled through that Oxford business somehow. And you'll get out of the Emily Prior scrape, too, take my word for it. As for the fighting, I'm sorry we can't accommodate you. If you'd only come out a month or so earlier, we could have put you in the way of enough to satisfy the greatest glutton going for that kind of

work. But, bless you, we're not quite sure it is all over now. There have been false starts for the Olive Branch Stakes once or twice already, and we may be at it again tooth and nail before long. If not, you must put up with the blessings of peace, or try to get out to the Cape or India, where you'll be able, perhaps, to obtain what you want. And now what are you up to for the rest of the day?"

Edward explained that he had several days' leave and nothing to do, so it was determined that he should take a shake-down in Tom's hut. The pony was disposed of in the shed where Tom and two brother-officers kept a cow and some poultry.

So that night Ted slept on a heap of rugs, furs, and blankets in one corner of the hut, and, being somewhat tired, thanks to the Russian pony's free action, was soon in the land of dreams, where he found that Mr. Prior had been Commissary-General to the Russian forces in Sebastopol, that the Emperor of the French had ordered him, Edward Harding, to be handed over to the enemy, and that the truculent and implacable Commissary-General had commanded his immediate execution, and that he was on the point of being torn in pieces by wild Russian ponies.

CHAPTER XII.

"I, JAMES, TAKE THEE, PRUDENCE."

MR. GOLDING, the uncle of Prudence Heath, was a man of the world. His brother-in-law, George Heath, Prudence's father, had seen and appreciated him in that character, and when he himself had become hardened, in his fight with the world and a wretched home, he came to envy Golding's qualities, and valued them too highly.

When George Heath married Charity Golding, the rich daughter of old Golding, the banker, he was a fine honest fellow enough in his way. He had been in the army, had seen service, and distinguished himself. But he had also run through his money, his health, and the better instincts of his nature. His distinguished service had not been recognized as he and all his friends expected, and he was, to begin with, a disappointed man on that account, and he was a man of refined tastes and extravagant habits, which he had learnt in the army. So when he came home from India he listened to the advice of his family, and married Charity Golding for her money. He meant to atone to the woman he wedded for her wealth in every possible manner afterwards,—there was so much grace left

in him. But he found, when he was tried, that he could not carry out his honest purpose. There were no sympathies, no community of feeling,—no love, in short,—and the married life of George Heath and his wife was a long misery, until he laid her in the grave. And then he was an old man, with only his daughter to make him cling to the world.

He felt his time in the world was not long, and now that the only tender place left in his heart was that occupied by his child, that tender spot was fenced and fortified by the coldness and hardness around it. As I have said, he had come to admire and envy Golding's knowledge of the world, and he believed that this man would be the best guardian his girl could have,—better, perhaps, than her father even. In this belief he left her in his charge, and gave him full power over her future.

He fancied to himself that one so rich and so pretty, too,—well, she was pleasing, and her mother had been plain,—would stand no chance if there were more George Heaths, even, in the world. But he had sufficient respect for his former self to believe that few men who married a woman for money would have sufficient honesty to intend—as he had intended—to atone for their mercenary wooing by a wedded life of devotion.

"It may wring her heart a bit to be guided by her guardian, but he will know best," he said. "Better a month or so of love-fever than a lifelong misery."

But George Heath had bequeathed to his daughter one thing over which her guardian could exercise no power. He had given her the noble character which had died in him many years before, but which sprang up again as vigorous as ever in her pure heart. What his friends had always spoken of as "George's pig-headedness" revived in Prudence as a loyal determination to do that which was right. And Mr. Golding, a man of the world, saw and recognized this.

It was on this account that he never checked what his wife called her foolish vagaries. Mrs. G., however, was far too well trained to obey—if not to honor—her husband to apply this term to his indulged ward's whims, except at such times when, both being ensconced in the four-post bed, she was allowed freedom of speech for once in the twenty-four hours. You see, Golding really was a man of the world. He ruled his household with a rod of iron, but he knew perfectly well that to exact too much of his wife in the way of reticence as to his plans and actions was simply to sit down on the safety-valve of the domestic

engine, and that explosions would be the result. Therefore, he allowed her—to carry on the metaphor—to let off the steam,—advise, abuse, praise, complain, bewail, or entreat, to her heart's content at that peaceful hour when, family prayers having been read, the gas turned off, and finally the bed-candle blown out, he and his spouse retired to rest. He had always this refuge, you observe,—whenever Mrs. G. got troublesome, he could lie quite still and go to sleep. And he knew, though he left her, as he dropped off in a peaceful slumber, a dangerous rebel, she would rise in the morning his devoted servant and slave.

Please don't frown, my dear lady readers, at this, because—don't you see?—the result proves that Mrs. G. was right, and that Mr. G. was not only brutal but wrong in falling asleep while his wife was propounding wisdom. Had he listened to her counsel to put an immediate stop on his ward's "foolish vagaries," she might—or might not—have been a very nice regulation young lady, not given to visiting poor people and falling in love with needy parsons.

At the same time, it is due to Mr. Golding, the man of the world, to remind you that the will of his ward's father was made on a certain plan, and that Mr. Golding's intentions were modelled after that plan. He thought Prudence's vagaries were foolish just as much as his wife did. But George Heath had directed that, in case of his daughter marrying against her guardian's wish, one half of the property should be divided among certain charities. This property had, after all, originally belonged to the Golding family, for it was the miserable money for which George Heath had bartered liberty and happiness when he married Charity Golding. So Mr. Golding determined if possible to recover it. To do so he must try to make himself as pleasant and amiable to little Prue as possible,—must try, in fact, to gain sufficient influence over her to lead her into a marriage with his son. And, knowing her character, he decided it was best to give her her way in all things.

His son, unfortunately, was not so clever a man as his father. He was one of those slangy, half-educated sons of wealthy parvenus who have to succeed their "governors," as they call them, in the business, and who have all the vulgarity and none of the advantages of wealth. He looked upon Prudence as his future wife, and treated her with all the impudent familiarity and neglect which the future Mrs. G., junior, would have to put up with.

When Prudence, in spite of advice, entreaties, and threats, declared herself *still* firm in her determination to marry James Harding, Mr. Golding was obliged to admit that his plans had been fruitless. There was nothing to be done but to hand over one half of the property to the charities specified in George Heath's will, and to keep the remainder himself. But Mr. Golding had the desire which so many vulgar people have. He wished to be a Member of Parliament. He had on one occasion gone so far as to issue an address to the "electors and non-electors" of Liverchester, when somebody brought down a well-known man and snuffed his chance out entirely, whereupon he withdrew. Still he nursed the hope of being some day the M. P. for Liverchester, and went through a good deal of his life in rehearsal and preparation for that great occasion. And since in nothing does the truth of the great fact that "a prophet hath no honor in his own country" make itself more evident than in a contested election when a local magnate goes to the poll, Mr. Golding was always seeing handwriting on the wall. Whenever he did anything at all public he asked himself what could be made of it by the opposition for electioneering purposes. The result was that his parliamentary ambition acted as a sort of conscience, and warned him off many a dirty profitable action.

He did not fail, you may be sure, to perceive what use his enemies might make out of his treatment of his ward. He beheld imaginary placards, "Who robbed the orphan?" "What did Golding do to the fatherless?" and such like amenities, in his dreams. What was he to do? As he very justly remarked, the wishes of the dead must be regarded, and the last will and testament of George Heath was a very plain and straightforward document, which even the most acute lawyer could not wrest a second meaning out of.

So Mr. Golding summoned his niece to him, and read her a long and serious lecture on disobedience to her nearest and dearest friend and protector. Then he drew a touching but entirely imaginary picture of her father's last moments. He described George Heath as dying in his arms, and intrusting his girl to him in the most affecting terms.

Now it unfortunately happened that Prudence had a good memory, and she had a clear recollection of being told by her nurse, who had been an old servant of her father's, that Mr. Golding was sent for when George Heath was taken ill; but that as there had never been any very great cor-

ality between them, he had not hastened to his brother-in-law's bedside, and arrived some hours after his death. Prudence was disgusted at the hypocrisy and falsehood of her uncle, and thenceforth all his eloquence was expended in vain.

In winding up his oration, however, he rose to a noble height of seeming unselfishness. He declared that he could not consent to punish her as severely as her father had intended that he should. He said his conscience would not allow him to take everything from her, and leave her to repent of her error in poverty; and here he drew a highly colored picture of the consequences of her marrying a poor man, and the reward of her disobedience.

Even though it was contrary to the last directions of his dear brother, he would leave her some portion of the fortune which might have been hers if she had been a properly regulated young person. He would give her a thousand pounds.

The sum was a trifle compared with the splendid property he acquired, even after settling with the charities who were his co-partners in the stroke of good luck.

At first Prudence was disposed to reject the gift with scorn. But on calm reflection she saw that he was merely giving her what was her own. She felt her father had never intended that she should really be deprived of her property. The threat was only to be held out *in terrorem*; not to be enforced if she wished to give her hand to some worthy man who already possessed her heart. So she consented, rather taking it as a right than accepting it as a favor, — expecting thanks from her uncle, not expressing gratitude herself, — to receive the thousand pounds. It would be a little something for James and her to begin life upon, and yet not so much as to pain him with the suspicion that his motives might be misinterpreted.

Mr. Golding gave a sigh of relief when he found that she took the money without any difficulty. He had anticipated considerable trouble, and was charmed to think that he had hedged with such success against the chance of his enemies making what he called political capital out of his relations with his ward.

Delighted with the success of this scheme, he set about carrying out another. He saw the inadvisability of his niece's remaining in Liverpool after her union with James. It would never do for wealthy Mr. Golding, the would-be representative of Liverpool, to have his niece and late ward going about the town in shabby clothes, — he knew she was just the sort of woman who would do

that, on conscientious grounds, — as the wife of a poor curate. He must guard against that, it was very evident; and the best way to do so would be to get the Rev. Mr. Harding out of the place altogether as soon as possible. It would not suit his purpose to have him turned out, because there would be a bother, certain foolish folk in the town having a high opinion of him, which, Mr. Golding felt sure, would induce them to come to him as the uncle of the curate's wife, and ask him to use his influence on his behalf. But for that, nothing would have been easier than to get rid of him, for the vicar was a fast friend and firm ally of Mr. Golding's, and would have listened to his least wish.

Luckily for Mr. Golding, he stood well with the church. He was to contend Liverpool on sound Tory principles, "Church and State, Bible and Crown, the British Constitution," etc., etc., etc. Accordingly, not only did the vicar regard him, but the bishop held him in honor. Happy Mr. Golding!

The bishop of Middleborough was a bishop of the old full-bodied fruity kind. He had been elected to the Bench for the sound reason that he had written a learned treatise "On the Reflective Value and Differential Meanings of the Greek Enclitics," or something of that sort. Something, you will take notice, which most eminently fitted him for the work he was appointed to do in the Christian Church. It is true that in his early days, when he was first tutor, and subsequently master, of his college at Oxford, he had been of rather vague opinions in theology. He had even shown a strong leaning towards German philosophy. But with apron and shovel-hat had come orthodoxy and zeal, — at least as far as can be judged from outward appearances. No bishop could be more earnest and proper than "J. Middleborough"; and as for heresies, why it was only the other day that he forbade the Bishop of Natal to open his mouth in his diocese.

Mr. Golding had no stancher friend than "J. Middleborough." The bishop loved a good bottle of wine and a first-rate dinner, and he always visited the future candidate for the representation of Liverpool whenever he happened to be in his vicinity.

Nothing could be easier than for Mr. Golding to ask his lordship to consider the case of the Rev. Mr. Harding, who had married — not altogether with Mr. Golding's approval, perhaps, but they must live — a niece of his. "Any small living which might be in his lordship's gift," etc., etc., etc. The thing was done when the idea was con-

ceived, so certain was the bishop of complying with Mr. Golding's wish.

In the mean time, the pestilence had passed away from Liverchester. It left no signs of its visit beyond the observable frequency of mourning habiliments and the mounds in the cemetery scarcely grown over with grass yet. It left no remembrance in the improved condition of the poor or the enlarged charity of the rich. It was one of those plagues after which the hearts of the manufacturing Pharaohs were hardened, and they refused to let the people go.

And when the long, dark days of winter were over, and the spring came, — when even in the heart of the town the young year made its presence known in the snowy spires of the white lilac and the golden cascades of laburnum; when around the city the fields put on a thin veil of emerald green, and the birds began to sing as they built their nests; when the meadows nodded with yellow cowslips and the fruit-trees were laden with blushing blossom; when the thorn-bushes were out in white clouds of flower, and the lambs were leaping; when the boughs were in their first pale, golden green, and the sky began to unfold its depth upon depth of blue, — then James Harding and Prudence Heath became man and wife.

They were married very quietly at a little village about three miles from Liverchester. The incumbent was an Oxford man, like James, and the old university sympathy had brought them acquainted. There were many of the clergy in the neighborhood who had been at Oxford, and they drew together naturally and became friends. Some of them — and I dare say James among the number — had been in their young days at college rather dainty in their notions, and spoke of brother university lads as "cads" or "snobs." But now they were older, and knew better, — thought, perhaps, that the epithets would have been more fitly applied to themselves than to these men with whom they were afterwards thrown, and who were good fellows enough, though they wore queer-cut clothes and never gave wines when they were at Oxford.

The clergyman who married James and Prudence was a poor man with a large family, but a splendid specimen of the kind of laborer much needed in the vineyard. He and James had suited one another, and he was ready at once to help James in the matter of the marriage.

So early one morning James called for Prudence, and drove her over in a pony-chaise to the little parsonage, where the parson's wife welcomed them with all the warmth and kindness of a good woman

made happy by assisting two true lovers to cast their lot together.

It was but a few yards to the church, and they walked to it through the fresh young grass, and heard the larks aloft singing the wedding-chorus for them. Prudence had the parson's two eldest daughters, quite little people, for bridesmaids, and very pretty they looked in their white muslin frocks. The curate of the next parish, another Oxford man, was James's best man; and good Dr. Hastings, of Liverchester, who had learned to know and love these people in the dark days when the pestilence was in the town, gave Prudence away.

As Prudence stood at the altar in her quiet plain gray silk dress and white straw bonnet, the sun peeped in through the east window and poured a very rainbow of jewels upon her through the stained glass. And from the yellow robe of a saint in the storied pane the same generous luminary flung a golden glory round James's head, and scattered a largess of lovely hues over the pavement, as though they were strewn flowers.

And as they stood thus, the clergyman read that most beautiful marriage service with a clear voice, that rang through the silent little church. What grand, simple words they were, thought Prudence. How could people who married for money, or in other ways unlawfully, listen to them without trembling and turning and flying out of the church?

Presently came James's "I will!" — deep, fervent, spoken from the heart. And then Prudence's lower, not less distinct, — sweeter, not less steadfast. So the beautiful service was read to its close.

And then James Harding, not ashamed of his love for this noble wife of his, took her gently to his heart and gave her the first husband's kiss. And the good clergyman's wife, shining out with smiles through her joyful tears, kissed the bride too, and blessed them both. And they were blessed!

Out from the lovely porch, when the names had been duly signed, into the broad light of the sun, amid the jubilant sounds of nature, the song of larks, the caw of rooks, the lowing of kine, the bleating of sheep, and the incessant carolling of innumerable birds!

A modest breakfast awaited them at the good clergyman's house, where a contented mind was accustomed to spread a perpetual feast, but where for this once the goodwife's busy fingers had laid out all the best dainties the house could supply, and had decked them with spring flowers very tastefully.

There were no speeches, you will guess,

at the warmest, most heartfelt wishes for the welfare of the newly wed. Should not you have liked to be at such a wedding-breakfast, reader mine? I confess I should, though I have a terror of those feasts as a rule. But this one seemed to be indeed a rejoicing over two hearts made one, over two lives blended like bass and treble into splendid harmony.

By and by the young couple set out for a little seaport some miles off, where they were to spend their honeymoon, James's next man having taken his duty at Liverchester for him.

CHAPTER XIII.

HIGHWORTH VISITED AND OXFORD REVISITED.

PEACE was proclaimed, and the allied armies were withdrawn from the Crimea. Some of our regiments, however, instead of returning to England, were ordered off to foreign stations, and among these was that gallant regiment, the 8th Dragoon Guards. A little disappointment was naturally felt by some of the brave fellows who had not seen home for many years, and had been looking forward to a quiet enjoyment of their newly acquired fame among their own people. The 8th Dragoon Guards had been on their route home when the war broke out, and they were sent on at once to the Mediterranean.

Some of the officers growled rather at being packed off to the East, but the growling did not remedy the matter. Those who had friends in high places managed to get leave of absence on "private affairs," and you may be sure that Cornet Martindale, among others, did not forget that a father who is an Under-Secretary of State is rather a useful sort of paternity to possess. So poor Major Pennifesse and Captain Knowbuddy, who had served their time in Canada, had to submit to being sent off to Madras without any holidays, while Cornet Martindale and Ensign the Honorable Sunthyng Sumwunne, who had only entered the regiment during the campaign, packed up their goods and chattels and went home to reap their laurels, the lions of a London season. which, by the way, is the nearest approach to immortality that can be made in these hurrying days. Even that great sensational lion, the gorilla, (that looks like Irish Natural History, does n't it?) was handed over to Mr. Spurgeon and Transpontia after a few short months in gilded saloons at the West End.

I think if the worthy Under-Secretary of State had known why his son was so anxious to return home, he would have thought twice ere he exercised his interest to obtain leave of absence. If he had exerted himself at all, it would have been, I fancy, to procure the immediate ordering of the 8th Dragoon Guards to Madras, and the suspension of all leave until further notice. But he was in utter ignorance of Tom's schemes, and very fond and proud of the lad; so he obtained permission for his son's return to England without meeting any serious opposition from the higher authorities, who themselves were susceptible of family attachments, and had telegraphed, perhaps, to commanders-in-chief to "take care of Dowb" amid all the anxieties and responsibilities of the campaign.

"Ted," said Cornet Martindale, entering Edward Harding's quarters in Balaklava, "I'm off for the little village."

"What little village?" asked the other, innocently.

"Why, what the Greeks called the 'metropolis,'—London, you old muff."

"How I wish I were going with you!"

"Why don't you?"

"Because I am not the son of an Under-Secretary."

"Don't you abuse a party as has made himself pleasant to you, you Radical, and likewise will doubtless be prepared to go in for your leave if your wishes."

"When do you start, Tom?"

"O, in a short time! If you want to go, I'll send off to the governor and get your leave, and wait until his answer comes."

"But that will be wasting your leave."

"O no! I can square that with the colonel. He'll let me take the days at the other end of my leave instead of this. Besides, I want you to come, because you must be my best man."

"You have made up your mind?"

"Yes, in a very small parcel. It's in the tooth-powder box in my dressing-case, in the event of accidents."

"Do be serious, Tom."

"Why? What's the use? If you've made up your mind to suffer the shilling amputation at the hands of a justly incensed governor, it is better to grin and joke, if you can, than to mope and try to anticipate the pain of the operation."

"Have you told Mary?"

"Did you ever detect any signs of congenital idiocy in me, Mr. Harding?"

"Why? What's that to do with it?"

"Merely that if I had told Mary what I intend to do when I get back to England, I

verily believe she would go away and hide herself where I could not find her."

"And I believe she would be right."

"And I know you're wrong. So, my dear Ted, don't say anything more about it. In the mean time put your best clothes into your bag, for as sure as my name is Tom and not M or N, as the case might be, I shall marry Mary Freshfield as soon as I return to England, and you will have to be my bridesmaid, — I mean groomsman, — or be knocked into an undistinguishable pulp, fit for nothing but exportation to the hospital at Scutari as calves'-head jelly. There, now!"

It was no use to argue with Tom Martindale when he had once come to a determination, so Edward supplied him with writing materials wherewith to address a letter to his father. The missive was smugled, by Tom's interest, — you see so many people knew that he was the son of an Under-Secretary, — among the despatches, and reached London with unusual rapidity. The answer came back in the same way, and in a few days Edward Harding was preparing for his homeward voyage.

When Tom and Edward reached London they stayed for a few days at Mr. Martindale's. But as it was necessary to make their arrangements for Tom's wedding, and with that view must see Mary and arrange plans together, they put up at Long's, and then slipped off quietly into the country for a few days, while poor Mr. Martindale was under the impression that they were spending a week with some brother-officers at Chatham.

Mary Freshfield was governess in a gentleman-farmer's family at Highworth, in Wiltshire, and thither, accordingly, the two friends made their way.

Poor little Mary was delighted to see them. A governess's life is dreary and weary enough, and her love for Tom was the one bright ray that made existence pleasant. And now, after their long separation and all her terror and anxiety on his account, here he was back again, and "only a little changed, after all!" For even Mary's eyes could not be blind to the fact that swarthy, bearded Cornet Martindale was a different sort of man from the dapper-looking, nicely dressed commoner of Denbigh College, who was so alarmed at having his umbrella opened one wet afternoon in Magdalen Walks.

"The change is not confined to my outside appearance, Mary," said Tom, gravely.

"What do you mean?" she asked, a little alarmed at his serious face.

"Mean! That I never deserved the af-

fection of such a jolly little angel as you, Mary; but that now, if I am not worthy of it, at least I can value it and you, and that I will, please God, do all in my power to be worthy of it and make it mine. How soon can you leave this place?"

"Why? I don't think before next quarter."

"O, nonsense! Next week!"

"Why, Tom?"

"Because I want you to unite your fortunes with those of a certain vagabond commonly known as Tom Martindale of the 8th Dragoon Guards. Because" — he dropped his tone of banter now, and spoke in a low voice not audible to Edward, who, however, was discreetly deaf and admiring the landscape with his back to the lovers — "because I want you to be my wife, — to marry me as soon as possible."

"O Tom! Have you told your father?"

"No, but I shall do so as soon as you say yes."

"Better wait, Tom, darling Tom, — he will be so angry with you."

"I can't help it. I won't go on deceiving him by concealing our engagement."

"That is true, Tom. I never thought of it in that way before. But he will forbid it."

"I'm of age, and he has no power to do so."

"Except the power every father, I hope, has over an affectionate and grateful son, — and I know you are that, Tom."

"Well, yes! But there are bounds, you know, Mary. If I owe my existence to him, in the first place, don't I owe another and a better life to you?"

"O Tom, I dread all this so!"

"Well, we must face it. Nothing can change my purpose. So how soon can you leave it?"

"I do not know. I must speak to Mrs. Potter."

It was arranged that Mary should have an interview with her mistress that evening, explain all to her, and hear what she had to say. She was not a very pleasant woman, and Mary expected to meet with great difficulties.

When they had seen Mary home, — for their interview took place in the fields, Mary not daring to ask them to her employer's house, — Tom and Edward returned to the "Bell," where the latter found a packet of letters awaiting him, forwarded by Mr. Martindale's butler, who was the devoted accomplice and friend of Tom, and had been so ever since that gallant officer first left off his long clothes. Some of the letters were bills, one or two were invita-

tions, and one was from his brother James, from whom he had not heard for some time. This was enough to occupy him for the evening; and as for Tom, he had ample subject for meditation. So they sat, one on each side of the bow-window of the old inn, in silence, smoking their cigars.

When Mary reached home, she was told by the servant that Mrs. Potter wished to speak with her immediately on her return. She accordingly sent word to that lady that she was ready to wait upon her, and was in a few minutes summoned to the parlor.

Mrs. Potter was an intensely fine lady. She was never weary of talking of "papa's estates in the North," and "when Lord George was over with papa for the shooting season," — the real fact being that "papa" had a little bit of land with a mill on it close to the moors, and used to let part of his house to a nobleman who rented the neighboring grouse. But you would never have suspected the truth of this from Mrs. Potter's language or behavior.

"Miss Freshfield, may I ask who your companions were to-day?"

Without any intention of evading the question, but really surprised and wondering whether Mrs. Potter meant Tom and Edward, Mary asked simply, —

"What companions?"

"Be good enough not to prevaricate, young lady!"

"Madam!"

"O, don't put on any fine airs with me, miss! Who are those men you were seen walking with to-day?"

Mary naturally hesitated a little, hardly knowing how to describe the "men."

"No wonder you're silent!" said that amiable lady. "I never heard anything so disgraceful, — a governess employed in educating youthful minds allowing strange men to make her acquaintance in the streets. For shame! And what do you think were my feelings on being told by Mrs. Parkins and the Miss Sougthers of such goings on?"

Even Mary's quiet temper was not calculated to hear this without being ruffled.

"Those gentlemen," she said, "are very old and valued friends of mine. One of them is my affianced husband, Mrs. Potter, and I suppose there is nothing very wrong in my seeing and speaking to him."

"O, so you took a situation with me without informing me that you had followers, miss!"

"I had no 'followers,' as you call them, madam. My — Mr. Martindale was serv-

ing with his regiment in the Crimea, and has only just returned."

"Well, engaged or not engaged, I'm not going to have a parcel of soldiers dangling about my governess, I can tell you. I'm not going to have my establishment the talk of the town, and won't be scandalized in this way. It's my belief no good can come of young officers making love to governesses."

"I came home with the intention of asking you, madam, when you could spare me. I do not wish to inconvenience you, but I should wish to go as soon as possible."

"O, go to-day if you like, — and a good riddance!"

The result of this interview with Mrs. Potter was, that Tom, as he sat smoking his cigar, was startled at receiving a note from Mary to say that she had been discharged from her situation, and wished to know what she should do under the circumstances. She had, she told him, taken lodgings at Mrs. Grimley's, the confectioner, where she was anxiously waiting to see him.

Mrs. Grimley, in spite of her unpromising name, was a thoroughly kind and good woman. She and Mary had been on pleasant terms for a long time, having struck up an acquaintance while the little Potters were devouring tarts in the shop. She was a motherly sort of woman, and Mary, without a female friend in the town, was glad enough to seek her advice and comfort when Mrs. Potter treated her so cavalierly. A confectioner's shop is somehow in every country town the rendezvous of all local love-affairs and flirtations, and as a consequence Mrs. Grimley was very sympathetic and good-natured.

"Come and stop with me, my dear; I've a bedroom and sitting-room you can have, and the young gentleman can come into the shop, which, being a pastrycook's, is open to all alike, and no one can talk, and it will be all right."

So Tom and Mary had an interview in the little back room of Mrs. Grimley's shop, where the cornet was supposed to be taking a bowl of soup. When he heard how Mary had been treated, he was anxious to go and pull old Potter's nose.

"But, my dear Tom, it was not Mr. Potter who was to blame," expostulated Mary.

"O, yes, it was, though! How dare he marry that woman?" said Tom; but he allowed himself to be appeased, and Potter's nose escaped the pulling.

After talking over various plans, Mary proposed to Tom to call in Edward and ask his advice.

"O, he'll be for sending you off to stay with Emily, just for the sake of seeing her again."

"Take care, Thomas, my son, or I'll drown you in your own soup," said Edward, who heard the last observation.

"Well, what do you recommend, then, Ted?"

"I have a really good sensible proposal to make. I have just got a letter from my brother, in which he tells me he has been presented with a little living by his bishop. You know the story of Jim's love and marriage, Tom, and you'll agree with me that he will be ready to sympathize with you and Mary, and assist you as far as lies in his power. What I propose is, that I shall write and tell him all about you, and then Mary can go and stay with them, and he can marry you. There! Is not that a royal road out of your little fix?"

Tom and Mary agreed that this was a solution of their difficulty, and Edward accordingly sat down at once and wrote to his brother. That done, he despatched the letter by the hand of Mrs. Grimley's nephew, a little pasty-faced boy, the envy of all the youth of Highworth, because it was currently reported that he lived entirely on raspberry-tarts and apple-turnovers, — a rumor which his rather unwholesome appearance was calculated to confirm.

"And now about Emily Prior," said Edward, turning to Mary and Tom.

"What of her, O Commander of the Faithless?" said Tom.

"It appears that her governor has written to Jim to hear what has become of me, what chance there is of my returning to Oxford, and whether I intend to keep my engagement."

"Whew! Perhaps he meditates paying your ticks, Ted."

"Not a bit of it! But he says poor Emily is suffering, and, upon my word, I have been behaving like a blackguard. I have not written to her for an age."

"Tom," said Mary, "did you ever tell Mr. Harding what I told you about his engagement?"

"Yes, of course I did. But, my dear Mary, he won't believe you, and still persists in considering that his unfortunate fascinations are so irresistible that no woman can escape them."

"Don't tease him, Tom, — I won't have it. But really, Mr. Harding, there is no reason for you to fret about Emily —"

"Ah, yes, — I know. He told me all you said, but unfortunately, you see, I know and feel otherwise, much as I might wish it."

"Well, there!" said Mary with sudden petulance, "I know it is very treacherous and unkind and all that to Emily, but that it is really for her good as well as yours. The truth is, Mr. Harding, that you are not the first university man, by two or three, to whom Emily has been engaged, and what is worse, I fear if you were to go up to Oxford now, and watch quietly, you would find she is far from being inconsolable —"

"Impossible! Impossible! Why, Miss Freshfield, you will sooner shake my good opinion of you than my faith in poor Emily," said Edward, angrily.

Mary was a little terrified at this outburst. Tom Martindale did not like it. It was as if their kindly intentions had sprung a mine that threatened the destruction of their friendship.

"Look here, Ted. Will you agree to one thing? Let us drop this subject for the present. To-morrow you and I will run over to Oxford, — nobody will recognize either of us there with our Crimean beards and military get up, — and we'll just reconnoitre a bit, and then — we shall see what we shall see."

And so the one cloud that threatened the long friendship of these two was dissipated, and the rest of the day passed pleasantly.

Next morning Tom and Edward sped off to Oxford, and put up at the Star. From that ancient hostelry they pushed forward a reconnoissance, as Tom described it, and invested Mr. Prior's house the first thing next morning, taking a supply of cigars with them, and ensconcing themselves in the parlor of a little public-house, whence they could keep a watch on the garrison.

About two o'clock in the afternoon Tom, who was on guard at the time, gave notice that the garrison was about to make a sortie; and, sure enough, in a minute or two Emily Prior sallied out, and turned her steps towards Headington.

"What's to be done, Tom? If we follow, she will recognize us."

"We must do as we did in the Crimea, O man of little resource!"

"What's that?"

"Come and see!"

Edward followed Tom, who had rushed hastily out and hailed a passing Hansom.

"Here, tumble off, young Bar," he said, addressing the lad who was driving, and who stared a little, and did not seem inclined to obey.

"Come out of that! Don't you know me? Mr. Martindale of Denbigh. Here,

like that, and call for the change at the Star this evening!" said Tom, tossing him a half-sovereign.

The lad recognized Tom, and, staring for a bit at Ted, recognized him too. Tom saw this, and threatened the youngster with the most awful penalties if he mentioned to any one that he had seen Mr. Harding. The boy promised silence.

Tom then put Edward inside the Hansom and mounted the box himself, and in this order they trotted gently after Emily, stopping every now and then, and only just keeping her in sight.

Imagine Tom's delight and Edward's rage, when, nearly at the top of Headington Hill, a tall, rather sandy youth joined Emily, and the pair wandered off arm in arm across the fields.

"Hold hard, Tom!" shouted Edward through the little trap in the roof; but Tom only replied by pushing the horse into a gallop.

"Hold hard, Tom! Don't be a fool! Stop! By Jove! if you don't I'll jump out."

"You'll break your neck if you do," said Tom, speaking through the trap. "If you'll promise to sit still and listen to me, I'll pull up; if not, by Jove! I'll take you back to Oxford full gallop."

Edward could not help laughing, and the laughter did him good. So he promised to hear what Tom had to say, and the cab was accordingly pulled up.

"Look here, Ted. No nonsense. You mustn't punch that youth's head, — he can't help it."

"I was n't going to do so."

"Well, I did n't know, and you see I could n't get off the Hansom and run after you, so I thought it better to come to terms first."

Finally the pair turned the Hansom into the field, shut the gate, and tied the horse to it. Then they ran off across the grass towards the upper corner, and, making a slight circuit, contrived to meet Emily and the sandy young gentleman in the next field. These two had been so absorbed in conversation that they had not noticed the Hansom or its occupants. Nor did they take much heed of the two who were coming to meet them.

When they came up, however, both Edward and Tom took off their hats, whereupon Emily shrieked and turned pale, and the sandy young gentleman turned very pink indeed, and began to propose punching some one's head. Tom immediately took him in hand.

"Sir, although I am an ex-member of the

University myself, I don't object to accommodating you in the matter of mutual punching, — except in ladies' society, — whenever you like. But it will be as well for you to know that my friend, also an ex-member of the University, is engaged to Miss Prior, and if he claims priority, I must in duty bound give way, for you see you've been making love to his fiancée."

"Emily, is this true?" exclaimed the sandy young gentleman, in tones of sorrow and surprise.

"She can't deny it, my dear sir."

Whereupon followed explanations, reproaches, anger, grief, tears, and incipient hysterics, the latter on the part of Miss Prior, who, however, abandoned the notion on seeing that the sandy young gentleman did not appear anxious to catch her.

The result was that then and there Emily Prior and Edward Harding broke off the engagement by mutual consent, Emily promising, on condition of their not "breaking" the sandy young gentleman to papa, to keep the old boy quiet, and return Edward's letters.

The sandy youth, being a gentleman, very nobly undertook to convoy Emily home, on the clear understanding that she was not to misconstrue that act into any encouragement of the idea that he was to be deceived any longer. He also, in a frank, awkward, boyish way, asked Tom and Ted to wine with him that evening. And Tom and Ted went and spent a very pleasant hour or so, leaving the youth, who, though a Queen's man, was a very decent lad, in a high state of excitement at the discovery that he had been entertaining the "Siamese twins," whose fame had not even yet died out in Oxford. He was grateful for having been saved from the artful Emily, who had actually accepted him, probably as a sort of reserve lover in case Ted were killed off.

I need not describe the relief of Edward, or his penitent apology to Mary Freshfield. As for Tom, he was in splendid spirits, declaring that the trip to Oxford and their doings there had reminded him of old days, and made him feel quite young again.

As for Emily Prior, she drops out of our story. I believe she still weaves her nets for unthinking undergraduates, but I fancy the danger of her fascinations must be sorely decreased by the ravages of that fierce enemy of all flirts and garrisons or university belles, Time. She will probably end by marrying some one in her own rank of life, and be the mother of daughters who shall lay their traps for our grandsons when we send them to college.

CHAPTER XIV.

MORE MARRYING.

I do not doubt that my reader at once guessed to whom James Harding owed the small living spoken of by his brother in the last chapter. Mr. Golding, we know, had put a request delicately to the Bishop of Middleborough, and we know also that "J. Middleborough," if he had seen any probable advantage to himself, would have presented the fattest rectory in his diocese to Dr. Colenso's heretical Zulu. Luckily, at this time the bishop had no relations who could benefit by his ecclesiastical patronage. His family, who were probably good judges of his capability, never looked for any great things from him, and so did not take orders in time to benefit by his advancement. He had a son, it is true, whom the bishop, who was one of the earliest to see his own chance of preferment, had sent to college, but the lad was only just about to take his bachelor's degree, after a very brilliant career at Oxford, during which he had taken several prizes for essays that his father had written for him, so his envious and unsuccessful rivals alleged; but I must, in candor to the bishop, state that I do not believe this, — not so much because I should consider he was incapable of such questionable conduct as because I cannot think even his advantage in years could have enabled him to beat any smart young undergraduate of ordinary talent. At any rate, the bishop at this time had no family claims to satisfy, so the first living that fell in was given to James. A florid letter, signed "J. Middleborough," accompanied the official announcement of the nomination. His lordship had remarked the zeal and energy, etc., etc., admired and sympathized with the ardor and earnestness, etc., etc., was truly grateful that it was permitted him to mark even in so inadequate a manner his esteem of such labors and services, etc., etc., and so on to the end of an epistle which had little of the Apostolic character, unless it were of the character of that particular Apostle who bore the bag.

James Harding and his wife had no difficulty in guessing to whom they really owed the living. It was one of the charms of "J. Middleborough" that, whenever he did any meritorious actions, people always looked for a personal motive.

"This is your uncle's work, Prue," said James.

"Yes, dear, I think it must be. What then?"

"Ah! that's just it, Prue. What then?"

"Will you—you won't refuse it, I mean?"

"What! a traitor in my own house, Prue! Treachery in my own bosom!"

And he drew her towards him and kissed her fondly. She nestled up close to him, with her head on his shoulder, and gave a quiet little sigh of happiness. Their lodgings in a humble part of Liverchester were the dearest and brightest spot in all the earth to them. You see, to make any place a home, there is only needed one very little thing,—love; and it is a great pity—is it not?—that we can't order it in with the new carpets and chairs and tables, because it is a very important piece of furniture. James Harding looked down into his wife's honest, frank gray eyes, which were saying, as plainly as ever eyes spoke, "I love you!" There was no treason there.

"Shall I take it, wife?"

"Why not, James?"

"You have heard me say I never would buy a living. This seems to me almost as bad."

"No, darling,—that cannot be, surely. I know we neither of us respect the bishop, except for his office's sake, but then don't you think, just as his personal character cannot prevent the efficacy of his episcopal functions, so this gift, for which you have taken no steps, does not suffer from his motives or intentions?"

"How she argues, this child-wife of mine!"

"I don't like to be called that, James. I know I am small and insignificant, but I am a woman and a wife, and have cast away childish things."

"Very well, Prue, we won't call you that offensive name any more. Shall we say 'old woman,' after the approved custom of the laboring classes of this civilized district?"

"James, you are wandering away from the subject. Will you accept this living?"

"I had far rather not. It seems almost like simony to me."

"Why, dear, you have taken no step to influence it. How do you know that it is not Providence that is holding forth this new duty, using the bishop's hands?"

"And these poor people among whom I have worked and prayed so long,—to my labors on whose behalf I owe the noblest prize man ever won,—such a wife!—what courage can I find to leave them, Prue?"

"We must not doubt, James, that as good a servant may be sent into the vineyard here; or that, at any rate, your work, which is needed elsewhere, will leave its effects,

ad that the people will hold to what you have taught."

"I hope so, but I love my poor flock."

"Darling, we are too poor to give them the present help which they need as much as the spiritual aid. Perhaps the bishop may desire to fill your place with some well-to-do kinsman. If so, the poor may find in him what they so much need,—some one with the power as well as the will to assist them."

"I think you could persuade me to anything, Prue."

So James accepted the living, which was situated in the southernmost portion of the diocese, and was a thoroughly agricultural parish, and not a very large one. It was nearly all of it in the possession of one man, a wealthy country gentleman of the old school, known in the neighborhood as "Squire Charlwood."

Squire Charlwood was a widower with two children,—the elder, a son, was practising at the bar; the younger, a daughter, was at home keeping house for her father. The old gentleman was one of the rare specimens—and their rarity is a matter of congratulation—of that hard, stern class of men who believed the feudal system was the only safeguard of England, that protection was the sole bulwark of their class, and that the suffering of the lower orders was a mere necessity required to make the upper class's comfort the more certain.

When James arrived in the parish, he was not a little surprised to find that, although there were several large farms in the village, employing very many hands, but few laborers resided there, and that wages were miserably low. He found, on inquiry, that this was owing to the squire's objection to building poor cottages, for fear of burdening the parish with paupers, in the first place; and due, in the second, to his letting what poor cottages there were on the estate in a lump to the farmers, who sublet to their workpeople, turning them out of house and home, or refusing them a roof at all, unless they accepted the miserable pittance which the farmers thought fit to agree upon among themselves.

Of the ignorance and vice which prevailed among the small population of the village, I dare not trust myself to speak. Herded and huddled like cattle, the wretched people led the life of beasts, while the farmers and their sons—those worst curses of country places—ruled like the ignorant and debased despots they were.

The late rector had been an easy-going, port-wine-loving sort of man, an ex-fellow,

nominated by the last bishop, who had been at college with him.

You will acknowledge James had no easy work before him. He was not exchanging Liverchester for a sinecure. He toiled and slaved, and despaired almost; for there is in a town population, no matter how dark and poverty-stricken, a sort of elasticity which gives a response,—shows some consciousness of your ministry,—whereas in such an agricultural district as this there is no answer, no sign to prove that some, at least, of your labor is not thrown away.

Still, supported by his noble wife, whose womanly tact and instinct did more, I fancy, than James's experience and earnestness, he worked on. The result was that, though still received at the manor-house,—because Squire Charlwood felt it a duty to acknowledge the Church,—he was far from popular there, being looked upon as a dangerous and troublesome fellow,—one of the new school of parsons, who could not be prevailed on to be quiet and mind their own business.

When James and his wife heard from Edward about Tom Martindale and Mary Freshfield and their difficulties, I am sorry to say they at once sided with those very headstrong young people.

"It's no use shaking your head and looking grave, James. I know your sympathies are with them, or, if not, ought to be, if only for the good example you set them."

"Yes; but, Prue, Martindale has a father who will be deeply grieved, I fear."

"I'm sorry for it, James, but it can't be helped, can it? and as Mr. Martindale, junior, I hope, marries for his own happiness, I think it is useless, after having settled that point, to waste time in thinking if it suits everybody."

"It's a good thing, young woman, that you have no children to learn doctrines so subversive of all parental authority."

"My dear, if I had twenty children, they should all marry at the dictates of their own hearts, not at mine!"

"Then you counsel an alliance with these scapegraces, in spite of poor Mr. Martindale's inevitable misery at his son's marriage?"

"Stop a moment. I suppose there will be nothing clandestine? He will tell his father?"

"O yes! I quite understand that."

"Then write off to your brother Edward, whom I long to see, by the way, and tell him to ask Miss Freshfield down to stay with us, poor girl, and say we'll do all in our power."

"Your commands, Prue, must, and therefore shall, be obeyed."

Accordingly, in another week Mary Freshfield came to stay with this good little couple; and when she had been with them a fortnight, Tom Martindale and Edward made their appearance, and took lodgings at a farm-house in the village.

Tom had told his father his intention, and the old gentleman was nearly broken-hearted, — so nearly that I believe Tom, who really loved him, would have abandoned his plans if there had not been a risk of still more serious heart-breaking in so doing.

It was a brief pleasant time this, when James and his wife almost forgot, in the pleasure of watching what reminded them of their own love and marriage, the hopeless task they had to perform in their dead-alive parish. Edward made a very favorable impression on Prudence, who liked his quiet and reserved manner, — due, it must be owned, chiefly to his sense of being much in debt, and out of luck generally. It was not long before Edward had confided to her his love-story, though I am bound to admit that he made himself out to be more disappointed at the deception than he really was.

In due time the wedding-day of Tom Martindale and Mary Freshfield arrived. It was very quiet, but not quite so unpretending as that of James and Prudence. Tom would not be happy till he had got down a case of champagne and a little cake, and he would have one carriage with two gray posterns, and was altogether more demonstrative than James had been.

Yet I don't suppose he was less sincere. He certainly did not love his wife the less — if he did not love her the more — because her health was drunk in sparkling champagne; nor was his affection less worth having because he threw it into the form of a cake. Nor, finally, was he less delighted to make her his own because they rode home — about twenty yards at most — in a carriage and pair, instead of walking.

Tom and Mary went off to the Lakes for their honeymoon, and Edward stayed with his brother. He became a little given to melancholy, and was apt to sigh and ponder over his difficulties. He was getting very tired of the world, for his martial ardor was dying out in the face of a humdrum garrison-life, his regiment having been recalled to England, and about, so he heard, to be stationed in Ireland.

Prudence saw his melancholy, and was very anxious to drive it away. She asked James if there were any deeper-seated cause

for it than his love-affair, and her husband told her about his brother's debts.

"Why, James, dear, if that's all, is there our thousand pounds? Let's pay them off for him. We shan't be poorer; we've plenty to live upon, have we?"

"You're the best little woman in the world!" said James, clasping her to his heart.

Having conceived this plan, Prudence lost no time in carrying it into effect. She made James write to a lawyer whom he had employed at Oxford, and get him to collect Edward's bills and send them to him. The lawyer obeyed, and I regret to say the list was a terribly long one, and the amount made a very, very large hole in the thousand pounds which James and Prudence had meant to lay by for a rainy day.

At last all was arranged satisfactorily, and one morning at breakfast James threw across the table to his brother the lawyer's letter enclosing a discharge in full of all Edward's debts. Edward could scarcely believe his eyes.

"Why, — eh? What, — all paid! By Jove! Jim, old boy, whose doing is this?"

James, who had broken the news in this off-hand way to spare his brother as much as possible, indicated Prudence with a jerk of the head.

Edward took her hand and raised it to his lips, and then, — well, he was an officer in her Majesty's service, but then he was young, and had never seen service, besides, so I don't consider him the worse soldier for it, — well, then he burst into tears, and his voice was so broken he could hardly sob out his thanks.

CHAPTER XV.

BELLA CHARLWOOD.

JAMES HARDING's new parish, the village of Bremning Minor, was a very lovely little place. Mr. Charlwood — "Squire Charlwood," as he delighted to be called — owned nearly the whole. And he took a great pride in it, though I am bound to admit that his pride did not extend beyond the trees, lanes, houses, and other inanimate objects therein, and was in no wise affected by the condition of the human inhabitants.

He had delightful plantations along the roadside, and little clumps of trees where three or more ways met. The small stream which flowed through the village was spanned here and there by picturesque one-

h bridges. The gardens in front of the cottages bordering the high road were carefully kept, and plentifully stocked with flowers. The cottages themselves would have delighted the eye of an artist with their brown thatch, quaint windows, and a thousand other little details which look charming in a picture.

You could not possibly pass through Bremning Minor without being struck by the care bestowed on it to make it look a rustic Paradise, — a very Eden.

But if you took up your abode for any time in Bremning Minor, you would have been rudely and rapidly undeceived. Behind the strips of plantation by the roadside were hovels hardly fit for human habitation. The money spent on the arches over the brook, which was in real fact the village drain, should have been laid out in bricking it over, and defending its neighbors from the noxious exhalations which were always rising from it. The gardens in front of the cottages did not belong to them, and were tended, not by the tenants, but by the squire's gardener. And the charm which the cottages had for the artistic eye was due to the fact that repairs were neglected: they owed their beauty to decay. The variegated splotches of mildew, the rents and fissures of the walls, the layers of moss on the turf, the graceful irregularity of the roof-line, the small windows with quarrelled panes, the low ceilings and little doors, were all pleasant points in a picture, but ugly and baneful things in a dwelling.

When you found out this, and learnt how delusive was the aspect of the village, it shook your faith in everything, and you almost began to suspect that the orchards of ruddy fruit in which the hamlet was embowered were only orchards of Dead Sea apples. And to some extent perhaps they were. For the produce of those apples was cider, and the worst and most injurious of that cider the farmers made their laborers take in part payment of wages, — stuff that was literally intoxicating, for it was poisoning those wretched creatures who made beasts of themselves with it, and no wonder, for it was no more than Squire Charlwood and the farmers were ever studying to make them.

You may perhaps be inclined to marvel that this state of things was allowed to go on when there was a woman, and, what is more, a young woman, at the Manor House. For I have told you that the squire was a widower with one daughter. But he never allowed her to interfere in any way with the management of his estate, or to see into

the condition of the poor. There were certain charities which were expected of a lord of the manor, and these he paid, as he paid his taxes, and that was not always without a grumble. But these charities were the housekeeper's work. He sternly refused to let his daughter have anything to do with them.

"The poor people weren't fit for her to have anything to do with," he said. "She could n't visit their houses without the chance of seeing or hearing something which she ought not. What were parsons paid for but to see after the lower classes? At any rate, he would n't have any of this new-fangled visiting nonsense in his house. She should n't go about among the poor while he could prevent it, — that was flat!"

He brought his daughter up to be a young lady, that perfection of ornamental uselessness. She had no knowledge of the world, or of the duties and cares of life. Accomplished she was most assuredly in all the arts that are unprofitable. If called on suddenly to do something for a living, she would have offered to make a bead purse or a butterfly pen-wiper, — at the very utmost a pair of Berlin wool slippers. If driven by unexpected necessity to provide something for her own dinner, I question whether she could have displayed a knowledge of any process more nearly approaching cookery than the manufacture of gum-water, or the solution of red sealing-wax in spirit of wine.

I think it likely that Bella Charlwood, in spite of these accomplishments of hers, would have found her life rather a bore but for that universal benefactor, Literature. Unluckily there is literature and literature, and Bella's reading was not of a high class. The library of Bremning Manor had been stocked by contract. The squire never cared to read much, except a law-book or newspaper. So he intrusted the choice of his library to the stationer at the nearest town, and that literary authority found he could make the best of the bargain by buying up a lot of third-rate three-volume novels of the Rose Matilda school. Such a collection of trash as that which filled the library bookshelves, I fancy, had never been seen before. On this pernicious rubbish Bella Charlwood fed until she lived in an ideal world of feverish impossibilities and diluted sentimentality.

The gypsies who encamped on the neighboring common at times were not slow in finding out this weak point in Bella's character, — if I may speak of one point of her character as weak without giving it an invidious distinction, — and the swarthy

cheats made quite a little income out of her, supplying her in return with romantic visions of the future.

Bella had never given her father much trouble, and so they agreed pretty well, though in his inmost heart he considered all women a nuisance. But his daughter had never resisted his orders, and obeyed to the letter his directions about the non-visitation of the poor. Indeed, it was not expected that a young lady, who lived in a region of fiction among imaginary troubles, which always cleared off at the right moment, should take any great interest in the sad and solemn realities of life. She only knew of the virtuous peasant as some one who lived in a cot covered with honeysuckles, whose daughter was pursued by a wicked peer, but who eventually died wealthy and beloved, blessing his noble and reformed son-in-law. There was no instance of this class in the village, but there were a good many low and ignorant people, and they she knew, from her experience of novels, were always utterly bad, and prepared to do any iniquity for money.

Of the real industrious poor she knew nothing, or at all events had not been taught by her reading to look for good qualities behind dirt and misery and squalor. So, while Jack Nokes's poor wife, with her baby at her breast, was on her knees before the squire in the justice-room, imploring, with bitter tears, mercy for that scapegrace, who had been caught snaring a hare (for which, by the way, thanks to the fancy prices insured by the Game Laws, the poulterer in the next town would give him twice as much as he could earn in a day by honest labor), — while this poor woman, I say, was sobbing her heart out over her actual sorrow, Bella, who might have been interceding for the wretched wife, was crying her eyes out over the imaginary woes of Clementina, whose Alphonso was about to cross the seas in search of his great-grandfather's marriage certificate, in order to prove his title to a dukedom.

Imagine Bella's delight when she heard from a friend of her father's who came over from Liverchester to dine with him, the history of the marriage of James and Prudence Harding, — a history which, if not strictly accurate, was the more suited to Bella's taste by having been transmitted from mouth to mouth, and rather gaining than losing in interest in the transit.

The squire was not influenced in the same way as Bella by the recital, nor did it make the Rev. James Harding more of a favorite with him.

"Serve him right to lose the money! A

mere fortune-hunting poor curate, cuss him! he's too well off now, having got this living through it. A pretty parson indeed, with his persuading rich young girls to disregard the wishes of their lawful guardians! Bella, my dear, I request you will avoid those Hardings as much as possible in future."

This last command was all that was necessary to make the romantic Bella ridiculously in love with the Hardings. It made clandestine, and therefore doubly delicious to this novel-fed girl, the admiration she felt for a real couple so like the young people in a story!

She began to bore Prudence to death with her attentions; she was incessantly rushing in "for just five minutes" to see dear Mrs. Harding, and telling her what a "delightful book she was reading, — O, so lovely! — with a runaway couple in it, so nice, and such deserving people! She was sure Mrs. Harding would like to read it. She might have it, if she wished, to-morrow!"

Prudence was too kind-hearted, and, what is more, too wise, to snub Bella, so she put up with the inflection. She felt that her husband's position would depend to a great extent on his relations with the squire, — that it depended on Mr. Charlwood whether James's life was pleasant or miserable, — and she was therefore as glad as only a woman can be of the opportunity of making a martyr of herself for the good of the man she loved. She bore Bella's gushing tenderness with the best possible grace, and took as much interest as she could feign in her sayings and doings, in the hope that friendly relations might thus be established with the Manor House people.

The arrival of Edward Harding was a great event to Bella. Of course there had always been an ideal king reigning in her heart, but she had never met with any young man who could by any stretch of imagination be considered as the embodiment of her essence of novel-hero. Her brother had sometimes talked of bringing friends down to stay the vacation with him, and had mentioned at different intervals different individuals as "his nearest and dearest friend," but somehow the visit had never been paid, and Bella was still obliged to content herself with an imaginary swain.

Now, however, her dream was to be realized. A real soldier, who had been in a real war, was coming down, and she at once pictured to herself a Paladin of surpassing strength and manly beauty.

How far Edward Harding realized the picture I cannot tell. But I imagine a very bearded and brown young man, in not very

new civilian attire, was not quite the same thing as the tall, well-shaven, pink-and-white-complexioned, red-coated, and plumed officer she had fancied to herself.

"And you were really in the Crimea, Mr. Harding?" said Bella. "You really went through all those perils and privations, and have come back unhurt, like Wallace in the *Scottish Chiefs*? O, how interesting!"

Edward was a little taken aback, and muttered something about having been in the Crimea. He was not quite certain whether this high-flown language were not intended for banter.

"And you have really seen a great fight?"

"O, several," said Edward, recovering himself, and feeling she was in earnest, but with a sly twinkle in his eye, as if he meant to revenge himself for his puzzlement.

"Do tell me which they were. The Alma, I suppose, and—"

"O dear, no, they were only Town and Gown rows at Oxford. I arrived in the Crimea too late to see active service."

"What a quiz you are, Mr. Harding! I declare if you didn't make me fancy you meant battles. But how disappointed you must have been! Were n't you fit to cry, like Alexander the Great in *Sophonra the Priestess*, because there were no more worlds to fight about?"

Edward declared he was rather pleased than otherwise, for he should probably have been terribly scared in a real battle.

"Ah, that's your artful courageousness! You know Sir Leofric pretended to Juliana in the *Knight of the Red Rose* that he was too frightened to go to the tournament, but he went on the sly, and conquered everybody."

"Did he indeed?" Edward asked, for he was not deeply read in novels or, indeed, in any abstruse science.

But though Edward was not deeply read in novels, he was at this period considerably tinged with sentiment. The shipwreck of his affections, embarked on board the *Emily Prior*, bound for the United State of Matrimony, had made him gloomy, and prone to consider wounded vanity as blighted passion. While he was engaged to Emily he was forever sighing to rid himself of the burden. But when he found himself suddenly released, he shifted his position, and tried to persuade himself that he was wretched at the desertion. The fact was, he liked to be a martyr, — there is nothing that is so popular among us as martyrdom, — and he made up his mind to consider himself ill-used in both cases. His frame of mind

exactly fitted him to fall a victim to Bella Charlwood's romance. You may be sure she did not fail to make unobtrusive love to him. She used to ogle and sigh and talk sweet nonsense to him, and he encouraged her. You see, when a man has just had a love-affair broken off, the position of the sexes is reversed, and it becomes a woman's task to woo him from his sad memories of the false one. And Edward submitted with remarkable grace to be courted from misogynistic reserve. Next to the pleasure of being a martyr there is nothing in this world so tempting as being the donor of the fragments of a heart. There is something superlatively flattering to one's vanity in being able to say to a woman (or man) who adores you, "I can only offer you the ashes of a heart. You must not ask me for love!"

Edward had not escorted Bella in her walks half a dozen times ere she had heard and sighed over the sad story of his attachment. She looked upon herself in the light of a Rebecca tending a wounded Ivanhoe, or a Zeluca striving to restore a blighted Bernardo to a desire for life. I will not attempt to record any of the high-flown discourses which occurred between these two in their sentimental wanderings, because I regret to say that, having little leisure for reading, I devote none of it to the perusal of such stories as would assist me to the style which Bella's studies had led her to adopt in all her conversations with Edward on such tender themes as his disappointed passion, or their purely Platonic friendship.

Of all the twaddle in life defend me from these Platonic affections! My dear Becky, when you undertake to play Rebecca to young Algernon, and in the most sisterly way bind up the wounds that the cruel Rowena has inflicted on him, be sure that it can only end in one way. He will recover to marry either you or Rowena, in which latter case your feelings towards the bride will be anything but sisterly. There is only one way in which a man who has misplaced his love can possibly be consoled. He must find some other woman who will not misuse his affections, and therefore, Bessie, or Annie, or Laura, or whatever your dear name may be, rely upon it that, call it sisterly if you please to begin with, the tenderness you bestow upon him must be very strongly flavored with the pity which is nearest akin to love of other than a sisterly nature.

Prudence watched the growth of this affection with great pleasure. But Prudence with all her wisdom was a goose, — une-

quivocally as great a goose in other people's love-affairs as she had been in her own. Just as she had thrown away wealth for a poor curate in her own case, so she disregarded common sense in the case of others. She never doubted for a moment that Edward's heart was racked with the most acute pain by the faithlessness of Emily Prior, and, though she was startled at the suddenness of the cure, she was really delighted to find that Bella could cause him to forget his anguish.

I suppose when people who are inordinately wealthy, and who dine off silver every day, are invited and condescend to go to the houses of meaner creatures, they do not dream of suspecting the spoons and forks of pewter; they never look to see if they are Hall-marked. Utterly unweeting of albatra or nickel, they do not spend a moment in wondering which substitute for silver is being presented them. At least, I hope they don't, and I imagine they don't; but never having been inordinately wealthy myself, I cannot speak from experience. I am, however, quite clear on one point,—that Prudence, never having known but one passion in her life, and that a thoroughly sterling one, did not dream of the possibility of such attachments as that springing up between Bella and Edward being rotted at the core,—that, in fact, the spoons were not even albatra, but only bismuth, fated to melt into nothing at the first touch of hot water. So Prudence took infinite interest in this sham sentiment, and watched its growth as if it were of priceless value.

And in the mean time it grew and flourished. Bella really was in love. You will observe I don't say she loved,—I only say she was in love,—because there is all the difference in the world between the two things. To her this mild form of the universal disorder was exquisite anguish. She thoroughly enjoyed all the miseries of jealousy, of separation, of doubt, of fear, and of fondness. She was in love after the approved model, and could have quoted the precedent of some heroine or another in her favorite novels in defence of each particular act of affectionate folly of which she was guilty.

Edward did not deceive himself with the notion that he really loved Bella. He was simply rewarding her for her kindness and tender interest. What else could he do? She evidently loved him, and he knew from bitter experience—so he argued with himself—what the pangs of an unrequited affection were. He would spare her all the pain he could. Life was of no further interest to him now. So why should he not

devote it, offer it as a sacrifice to this poor girl, who had formed an attachment for him? He told Bella all this when at length the time came for their declarations, as come it did, of course, before very long. But she was only the more charmed to find this additional mystery and complication. If there had been no obstacles and no eccentricities about their attachment, if her father had given his consent and Edward had been wealthy, I think she would, perhaps, have turned up her nose at a match so opposed to the rules as made and provided in well-regulated novels for all instances of the tender passion.

Edward was very well satisfied with a tacit engagement. He did not burn to ask her father's consent to their union. He was content to go on in a desultory way as long as you like, and he therefore met Bella half-way when she began to entreat him not to destroy their happiness by divulging their love to papa. She would n't have cared two straws for any love that was n't clandestine, and he only cared for it as a sort of occupation for his idleness, a distraction from his thoughts of the past and the cruel infidelity of woman. For, as I have already said, although as long as he was engaged to her he did not discover any regard for Emily Prior, no sooner was the engagement at an end than he began to suffer all the pangs of a disappointed passion.

But these two young people were reckoning without James and Prudence. James had taken no heed of their gambols, but, as we know, Prudence had watched them with deep interest, and as soon as she knew that the couple had declared themselves and plighted their troth, she told her husband. Even the best women are match-makers at heart.

When James learnt this new flame of Edward's he was not over-delighted, and he was still more uncomfortable when he found that it was a clandestine one.

"My dear wife," said James, gravely, "I would n't for the world hurt Ted's feelings, but I really must talk to him seriously. This kind of thing is underhand and disingenuous. If he loves Miss Charlwood, he must ask her hand of her father honestly, like a man, not try to steal her heart clandestinely."

"This from the man who stole Prudence Heath's heart?" asked his wife, smiling fondly on him.

"That man, my love, hid nothing of his intentions or acts, nor did Prudence Heath, and I'm sure Prue Harding approves of her honesty and straightforwardness."

CHAPTER XVI.

DABBLING IN LITERATURE.

THE well-known "skeleton in the cupboard" theory, if it be true in the wider and more terrible sense in which it is generally spoken of, is undoubtedly true on a smaller scale. There is not one of us who has not some pet weakness or folly — not a whole skeleton, but a finger-bone, or perhaps even a tibia — concealed in a dark corner, only to be brought out when we are secure from observation. I have heard of an honest and upright man who would not have robbed his neighbor of a penny, but who could not resist the temptation of making a false return of his income to the Inland Revenue. I have known a lady who would have turned out of the path to avoid treading on a worm, but who scarcely hesitated to destroy a dressmaker or two when she wanted a ball-dress at short notice. Nay, I have heard of a great and generous nobleman, who was a large contributor to charities, but who did not scruple to send a workingman to jail (and his family consequently to the workhouse, or worse), because he obeyed the "human instinct to kill," and shot a hare.

You will argue from this, I dare say, that I am going to expose the weakness of some of my good people, and that the weakness is a very awful one. Well, I will not attempt to disguise the fact. One of my good people does indulge in a secret failing, and a very heinous one.

"Who is the culprit?" you ask.

I tremble to confess it is Prudence Harding. You start and shudder. What will you do when you hear what the clandestine guilt is which I must declare proven against her?

Prudence Heath actually "wrote" on the sly, — was an authoress in a small way! It was an unpardonable crime; but then, what can one do? It is no use my attempting to conceal the fact, because her name is on the title-page of a little book for the young which I see advertised to-day.

I will tell you how it was that she became addicted to the terrible vice.

During the time when she was actively employed in trying to better the condition of the poor of Liverchester, she came in contact with Miss Brathwayte, who was one of those ladies that wear stick-up collars and white waistcoats, and part their hair on one side. What she did besides this to better the condition of the laboring or indigent classes, I do not know, but she was supposed to have taken up those questions by the way as she was promoting the Rights of

Woman, and much was expected of her; and certainly, if eccentricity of dress and an aptitude for doing everything unfeminine could have been of service to the cause, Miss Brathwayte would have been an invaluable ally.

She was no particular favorite with unobtrusive, active little Prudence, but she was much too shrewd not to see that that young person could be of infinite service to her, so she forced her friendship upon her. She prevailed on her to report on the condition of the poor of the district, and these reports, professedly "edited by Miss Brathwayte" (who got all the credit for whatever in them happened to be valuable), were forwarded to Head-Quarters, where they were highly spoken of. By "Head-Quarters" I mean a sort of society in London, composed of very manly young women and very old womanly men. Some of the latter were connected with journals or periodicals chiefly supported by female readers, — publications which recommended themselves especially to Women who had Rights. One of these gentlemen was fairly shrewd, considering the class of minds he had been associated with for many years, and it occurred to him that the young lady who reported so ably under Miss Brathwayte's editorship might do something under his management.

Prudence was greatly surprised one day to receive a letter from this worthy, wherein he besought her to favor him with a few articles on social subjects, for which he offered a price which seemed enormous to Prudence, but was in reality a rate of pay at which a fire-and-accident reporter would kick furiously. But it seemed to this inexperienced girl a marvellous sum, — perhaps the more marvellous because she did not want it, in the first place, and because she would earn it by her own labor, in the second. I will point out what I mean by these two things. First, had she wanted it, the sum would have seemed smaller, because a very great amount of money in the lump looks less imposing when you have to tell off so much for bread, and so much for bed, and so much for clothing. Second, the fact of realizing money by your own exertions is a pleasure of which the zest is not easily lost, but which, to a beginner, is a delight unsurpassable.

The wise editor had little difficulty in inducing Prudence to contribute to his periodical, but after a time, the venture not proving remunerative, it became necessary to strike out a new line. *The Domestic and Social Economist* lost its distinctive character, and when it appeared as *The Domestic and*

Social Economist, with which is incorporated the Monthly Treasure-house, showed a tendency towards romances and light literature, which was quite inconsistent with the ideas of the white waistcoated and side-partinged middle-aged young ladies who had done so much to swamp it in its original form. But the editor of the rehabilitated magazine did not let all the staff go. Of course Miss Brathwayte and the stiffest-starched stick-ups and most provokingly clean white waistcoat seceded. A few of the writers, however, still stuck by the ship. They were not so devoted to abstract principles and the visionary Rights of Women as to lose the pleasure of seeing themselves in print very willingly.

Where is the author who has entirely outlived his enjoyment of proof-sheets? Why then should these poor girls, of various ages, ranging from twenty to forty and upwards, abandon the little amusement they derived from perusing their own harmless twaddle?

The cautious and appreciative editor was not a man to lose sight of Prudence. He suggested to her a little essay in the regions of fiction, and even went so far as to invite a contribution in verse.

I have unearthed a volume of the *D. & S. E.* of this period, and it appears to me that the following lines, signed P. H., must be our Prudence's:—

DREAMS.

By P— H—.

The flowers that kiss the stream
Are brightly reflected therein,
As the things we see in a dream,
Which are not and never have been,
Mine own,
Which are not and never have been:

The stream glides away without a cease,
And blossoms still bloom in the light;
Then night brings slumber and peace,
And visions of pure delight,
Mine own,
And visions of pure delight.

I sit beside the wave,
Where the river goes dancing ever along,—
From the cradle it doth to the grave,
With always the same song,
Mine own,
With always the same song.

The cautious and appreciative editor no doubt saw that verse was not Prudence's forte. She was faulty in her rhymes,—witness the second and fourth lines of the two first stanzas,—and she was confused in her images, and she hobbled and hopped painfully in her rhythm. So he did not urge her to write any more poetry. But he was so satisfied with a short story she wrote for him, that he engaged her to write a novel for him at the rate of about five thousand

words for two-and-sixpence. It is true that, on learning from the publisher soon afterwards that an emissary of a rival publication had been trying to learn the name and address of the author of *Ruth's Reckoning*, he raised that munificent remuneration to four shillings a page. But then he entrapped Prudence into a promise not to write for any other periodical while *Ruth's Reckoning* was running.

How that story affected the sale of the periodical, or what the public thought of it, we shall never know. For in a frantic desire to bring its expenditure within bounds, the proprietors began to cut down the outlay so vigorously that they brought down the magazine itself with a run. While it was being done as well as it possibly could for the money, with fair type and not utterly execrable engravings, the *D. & S. E.* had barely kept its head above water. When it was printed for a song on bad paper, and the illustrations came to an end, it was only natural that the circulation should not increase.

Towards the end of the time Prudence did not receive her paltry pittance with any regularity. Small as it was, she had counted on it with pardonable pride, and she wrote, therefore, to ask for it. The crafty editor candidly told her of the declining fortunes of the periodical, and implied delicately that its approaching untimely end was chiefly due to his unhappy error in employing her. The result was that she was so conscience-smitten that she was half prepared to disgorge all her little gains, and was indeed haunted for a considerable period by a ghost of the paper, attired, I suppose, in a proof-sheet, and wringing its hands while it accused her of murdering it.

Who would have suspected that very quiet and grave Prudence Heath of such a career of literary vice? Little did James Harding, when he made her his wife, suppose that her soul was burdened with remorse for the great crime of bringing *The Domestic and Social Economist, with which is incorporated the Monthly Treasure-house*, to its untimely grave.

Prudence kept this skeleton so closely locked away in its dark corner that no one ever dreamt of its existence. When she married she had no intention of ever taking up the pen again. Her experience of literature had been far from encouraging, and nothing but dire necessity would have induced her to indulge in the delicious impropriety again.

Not very long after the payment of Edward's debts Prudence began to have a fresh object for her cares and anxieties, her sav-

ings and earnings. She was about to become a mother. There was a strange awe and delight in the thought, and, like the parent-bird devising a nest for her coming brood, Prudence began to plot and scheme for her child. She did not grudge the money which she and her husband had given to release poor Ted from his weary slavery, but she felt a necessity for devising some means to replace the amount by which baby's fortune, that should have been, was diminished. She instinctively thought of her old literary efforts, and, having obtained somehow or another a little more knowledge of the world of letters, she fancied that she might turn an honest penny by writing.

It is astonishing to think that people who read, and should be able to appreciate, the improved literature of modern times, will insist on believing that to earn a livelihood by the pen is one of the simplest things possible. Instead of seeing, in the number of widely circulated publications in which this age abounds, an evidence of the quantity of skilled labor (not to say so much as experienced talent) that there is in the field, they begin to dream of an easily acquired income, and pester editors, whose duties in these days of penny postage are no sinecure, with endless batches of inferior writing, mere twaddle, that they themselves would be the first to condemn and complain of if it appeared, — always supposing that it was the contribution of some one else.

Prudence now betook herself to her little room whenever James was engaged on his sermons, and very often when he was not. He did not take much notice of her absence, for he supposed she had household duties to attend to.

Little did he imagine that she was seated — at the time when he fondly imagined her to be counting out the clothes — in her quiet room, with pen, ink, and paper, engaged on her novel.

Yes, Prudence was writing a novel. And really, when one reflects on the majority of those three-voluminous stories which it fell to her lot to peruse, as a member of the local reading society, one can hardly wonder that she should hope to emulate those remarkable works of fiction.

By the time that Edward was called upon to promise that he would undertake the responsibility of being godfather to Jim's first little girl, the second volume of *Cyril Markham, or Gold and Goodness*, was half finished. But the appearance on the scene of Ted's godchild, a small but very lively young lady, with a voice of her own, and early indications of a front tooth, dissipated for a time

all Prudence's literary visions. Cyril Markham, who at the two hundredth page of Vol. II. was on the point of committing a forgery, in order to rescue his lady-love's disreputable father, a city speculator, from bankruptcy, was left hovering on the brink of that crime for a considerable period.

The manuscript was locked away in a drawer until Prudence was well enough, and Miss Prue the Second — so baby was christened — had attained an age when she might be intrusted to a great extent to Martha Ogleby, the young and rather raw nurse whom Prudence the elder selected for the guardian of her first-born.

Martha Ogleby was a round-faced, innocent country girl, whose normal state was wonder and bewilderment. But she was so content to wonder, without attempting to allay that state of mind, that Prudence did not scruple to resume her pen and take up the thread of her story again, though nurse and baby were in the room pretty constantly. There was no possibility of Martha's guessing what her mistress was employed upon. Martha was the only daughter of a lone laundress, and, owing to early training, her mind never soared above the mangle and the wash-tub. When she saw Prudence writing page after page of manuscript, all that it suggested to her was that missus had a powerful deal of washing to put down, and the only intellectual effort it cost her was the attempt to calculate roughly what the mangling would amount to at three halfpence a dozen.

As for baby, she displayed an early taste for literature, for whenever mamma chanced to take her on her lap while engaged in composition, the young lady would immediately commence to devour her mother's story with absorbing interest, — tucking it into her pink gums with a random avidity very like that of the sea-anemone.

Despite all drawbacks, however, Prudence persisted, and before very long had finished a considerable portion of her story. Whether the quality was at all commensurate with the quantity it is impossible for me to say.

The story had now so nearly approached a conclusion, that Prudence began to wonder what publisher she had better apply to. First of all she very naturally selected Reardoes and Faldstool, the publishers of the religious books which James distributed as prizes in his school. They — as naturally — declined the offer. Then she wrote to Puffham Brothers, whose name appeared on the title-page of the *Dropped Stitch*, the last novel which had fallen in her way. But Puffham Brothers were not speculative

men, — they never dreamt of exploiting an unknown writer. They waited until an author had made a success, and then gave an absurd sum for a work "to follow" from the same pen, — and I am glad to believe lost generally, as they deserved for cropping a field that had only just borne. So Puffham Brothers declined Prudence's offer, and she had to try Spink and Nipper. Spink was her correspondent, and was most affable, — so affable that he even took her into his confidence, and told her that he, personally, thought very highly of the novel, but unfortunately his partner, who, he implied, was no judge, thought otherwise; but he could contrive, he thought, to induce him to let the firm publish it on terms which meant, in so many words, nothing at all! From Spink and Nipper, Prudence turned her attention to Mr. Pownceby, the great publisher of everything that could be desirable in the way of literature for ladies. Mr. Pownceby suggested that Mrs. Harding should call upon him. He always liked to see people, because he could talk exalted humbug as well as any man living, and trusted besides in the effect of his personal appearance, which was venerable. I may add that his humbug and his appearance constituted the only capital he possessed.

Prue was of course taken in by the fellow. He had deceived far more experienced people than Prue. So she worked away with a will on her story, which, he hinted, would appear in the pages of *Woman's Home*.

O James Harding, to think that the gentle, innocent, sweet little woman whom you fold to your confiding breast is in reality that awful thing, a female novelist! Well! that crafty woman continues her work, and though she sheds ink, actually abstains from shedding blood, — though some people would hardly believe that of a literary lady, — and is busily engaged in constructing a plot to enable her to run up to London.

CHAPTER XVII.

THREEPEN'ORTH OF BRONZE.

WHY, Jim, you look quite fagged out," said Edward, who was smoking a pipe in the library when James arrived from his visiting duties.

"I am very tired," said the parson. "The parish is scattered, and there are many sick."

"Yet they talk about the country being the place for health."

"My dear Ted, if it were not these

people would die off round us — fall like soldiers in battle, to use a figure which you ought to understand."

"How is it, Jim?"

"Because they are so badly housed and so miserably paid. I have poor parishioners who do not know what it is to see meat oftener than about four times a year, and then it is greasy pork. They themselves are worse steyed than the pigs that supply that pork, and they are generally diseased, or the meat would not come within reach of these poor wretches. The houses have no draining and no ventilation, or only such wholesome ventilation as may be procured by opening a window or a door and letting in the exhalations of heaps of decaying animal and vegetable matter."

"But who's to blame for all this?"

"The squire."

"What an old brute he must be!"

"He is hard and brutal, Ted, and that makes me more concerned on your account."

"On my account?"

"Yes, Ted, because I know the sort of reception he will give you when you go to ask his daughter's hand."

Poor James Harding had had considerable difficulty in trying to find the most delicate way of speaking to his brother on the subject of Bella, which he discussed, as we already know, with his wife. He did not want to offend Edward, or hurt his feelings, the more especially as he, James, had paid off Edward's debts, and did not wish to be suspected for an instant of taking advantage of the obligation to dictate to his brother or interfere with his freedom of action in any way. He had been worrying his brains sadly to devise some expedient, and after all he found this chance conversation the easiest way of doing it.

Edward was a little taken aback at the notion of his brother's taking an interest in an attachment of which he himself could hardly be said to be conscious.

"But I'm not exactly — at least, not just yet — in fact, I am hardly prepared to take that step."

"But you and Bella are engaged, are you not?"

"Well, yes, something of the sort."

"Surely you don't intend to keep it a secret from her father?"

"Why, you see it is Bella's special wish, and what's a fellow to do under the circumstances?"

"There is only one honorable course, is there, Ted?"

"Well, if you put it in that way, I suppose there is, — but then all things are fair in love and war."

"I don't think you mean that seriously, Ted, do you?"

"Perhaps not; but I have never seriously considered the question in that light."

"I suppose there is no doubt of your attachment?"

"O dear, no. Poor girl, I believe she is very fond of me!"

"And you, Ted?"

"Well, you see, James, after a disappointment like mine, a man has very little of what is called sentiment to bestow. But I know too well what one suffers in the bestowal of an unrequited attachment, and I will give in return for her affection all that a man can give whose heart has been early blighted."

All this was very pretty talking. But I think we know how very little Edward is to be depended on in these matters. Love is one of the most extraordinary diseases that we mortals are subject to. It is well called an affection. It is very like gout and rheumatism; it flies about us, and touches the head, or the heart, or the liver, at times, just at its own sweet will. When it affects the head it is dangerous. For a man who loves with his head loves very strongly. This form of the disorder attacks us late in life. When it attacks the heart it is generally communicated through the eye. It is violent then, but the paroxysms do not endure. When it attacks the liver it is simply another form of bile. It jaundices the eye, and makes one irritable and full of fancies. It produces languor and dreaminess.

Now I think Edward's love had flown to his liver. Let us examine the symptoms. First of all, he had fallen in love with Emily Prior because it was so convenient for Damon and Pythias to become attached to a Hermia and Helena, "both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion."

This was languor and dreaminess. Then he continued to cling to the engagement with Emily from a morbid desire to be an honorable martyr. Mere bile that! And then when he found out his mistake with regard to Emily, he immediately turned round, persuaded himself he had loved her, and elected to suffer the pangs of disappointed love. Clearly aggravated bile. And now, when Bella rather threw herself at his head, he accepted what he at once concluded was a deep and heartfelt passion, and returned it by the offer of what he believed was a broken heart. Only jaundice after all, bilious fancies, and tinged views!

The fact is, Edward was very susceptible. Some people catch cold at the ghost of a draught, by losing a button off their shirt-

collars, or by substituting a narrow watch-ribbon for a broad one. Just in this way some young men fall over head and ears into the tender passion, — so tender, indeed, as to be almost soft, — at the mere waft of a petticoat, the sight of a fluttering tress, the glance of an eye. Most young men, I may say, take the disorder early in this form, which fortunately does not prevent them from catching it again later in life, when it flies to the head.

James, I dare say, did not know much about the diagnosis of the passion, but it is probable he thought the blighted heart of which Edward spoke was merely a little affected by a green insect which, as every owner of geraniums knows, can be extirpated by smoking.

"Well, Ted, I think you will see, on reflection, that the right course to take is to go and speak out honestly to Squire Charlwood."

"Humph! I suppose you're right."

"I'm sure I am, and so are you."

"Very well, I'll do it."

"That's right, Ted. Thank you," and James shook his brother's hand warmly.

"Why thank me, Jim?"

"Because I was really in a most difficult position."

"Well, upon my word, Jim, I'm very sorry if it was owing to me, but I don't see how."

"I've got odd notions of duty, perhaps, but you know, Ted, if you had not offered to go, I'm afraid it would have been my most painful task to do so myself. I cannot, in my position to the squire as one of my parishioners, — indeed, in the mere abstract position of a clergyman, — see anything of this kind carried on in a clandestine way, especially by any of my own family. Mine's not a pleasant position, Ted, and with a man to deal with like Charlwood, all its difficulties force themselves upon you. I know I am no favorite of his, for as I feel compelled to deal strictly and justly towards him, I must deal strictly and justly towards others, and this has brought us in contact more than once in matters that concern the parish and his tenants."

"By Jove! that's true, Jim. Well, I always thought you parsons led such jolly, easy lives."

"A great many people think so."

"And a great many parsons do so, eh, Jim?"

"There are black sheep in every profession, — your soldier is not always a hero!"

"No, by Jove! he is n't, Jim. There were some brutes in my regiment. One of

our fellows told me that the captain of one company, while leading his men, was shot in the back by one of them who owed him a grudge. Think of that,—and in battle too!”

“I’m hardly surprised. While I was at Liverchester I found that no respectable men would enlist,—the pay was so small, and the life so hard. It was only the born vagabonds and ruffians, whom nothing could civilize, that enlisted, and they only when they were practically outlawed and had no other refuge.”

“But there are brave fellows among them.”

“Yes, and that makes it the harder to understand. Considering the material, it is wonderful what soldiers ours are!”

“Why don’t you teach ’em better?”

“We—meaning the parsons—can’t get at them. I’ll tell you a story in point. There was a young lad in my parish who was the terror of the neighborhood. He was just at ‘hobbledehoy’ age when I got the curacy, and the very scourge of the school. Not that he belonged to it, but he was always tormenting either the master or the scholars. When I came I took him in hand. He was a mere unlicked cub—”

“So you licked him!”

“Yes, in one sense. He had been more than ordinarily troublesome to the schoolmaster, a mild, inoffensive man, one day, so I went down, took my gentleman by the collar, and lugged him bodily into the playground. ‘Look here, my fine fellow,’ I said, ‘I can’t have our work hindered by you. Either come into the school or go away.’ ‘Who’s to make me?’ said he. ‘I will,’ I said quietly. There happened to be a beam lying in the yard,—the schoolhouse was only just built, and the materials were still about,—so I said to him, ‘This bit of wood is about six times your weight. I don’t want to hurt you, but I’ll just show you what I’ll do to you.’ You remember I and Homfray spent one ‘Long’ up in the North, where I had practised all the Scotch games, putting the stone and throwing the caber. I was n’t quite sure that my muscle was n’t a little flabby in spite of tubs and dumb-bells, but I determined to try it. So I took up the beam,—it was an end sawn off about my own height,—and, balancing it a bit on my hands, pitched it across the yard. It was not a very large yard, and it was not a very big throw, but it was quite enough. The lad did n’t say a word, but he went up to the balk and ‘hefted’ it, and found there was no trick, and then he slunk out of the yard like a beaten dog. But I had taken a

respect to him, because, from all I could learn, he was no bully. The little boys and girls idolized him. ‘Stop a bit,’ said I. He came back like a lamb. ‘If you’ll come to school regularly, I’ll teach you how to do that, and lots of other things, after hours.’ It was a forlorn hope, but to my surprise he jumped at it. In order to keep my promise, I had to have him at my lodgings in the morning, when I was getting up, because I always allowed myself three quarters of an hour at the dumb-bells, and that was the only time I could spare for him. Well, he got on well at school, and was learning his club-exercise of a morning at my lodgings in style, when one day there was a great commotion at the door of the schoolhouse, and in came his mother, a wild Irish woman,—we have lots of Irish in Liverchester,—and a pretty to-do she made, declaring we were ruining her boy, making a black Protestant of him, and what not, and then for the first time I learnt he was a Romanist, for he had dropped religion for gymnastics. So I lost my pupil.”

“Then the fact is you want schools where all religions may go—”

“Secular education, Ted! It’s an awful thing to talk to a parson about, and so it should be. But the longer I’m at it the more I’m convinced that that’s the only remedy for the ignorance and helplessness we see around us; not so much in villages, though why I hardly know. Of course the principle ought to apply to them as well as large towns.”

“Is n’t it because you parsons, or the squires, are such little kings that the people all sacrifice their prejudices and partialities to the shrine of the powers that be?”

“It’s only too likely, and if so, the independence of the poor, which is the only thing that keeps them above the level of the brutes, suffers; and I’d rather, I’m afraid, have secular education for them, though I’m obliged to own it reluctantly.”

“What was the end of your *protégé*, by the way, Jim?”

“He fell from bad to worse. The little training I had been able to give him was no use, or worse than none. He became, as he grew up, a drunkard, a thief, and a ruffian. He was sent to prison several times, and at last disappeared from sight altogether. But just as I was leaving Liverchester he turned up again. He had enlisted into the Line, and had served gallantly. He had gone through the Crimean campaign, and was a corporal. The little reading and writing he had picked up at school stood him in good stead. He had worked hard at it, and so his gallantry brought him promotion, which

was not, as is too often the case, hindered by his ignorance. He had the Crimean medal, and he had more than that,—the Victoria Cross!"

"By Jove!"—a sigh.

"Yes, that little threepenn'orth of bronze for which brave men are ready to risk life and limb at every opportunity. O Ted, that's the one thing I envy you soldiers."

"It's a grand thing, Jim! All the other crosses and stars may be got in all sorts of ways. They make men knights, and baronets, and lords, and that kind of thing, for the most absurd reasons. But there's only one way of winning the threepenn'orth of bronze, as you call it."

"I think the inscription is so simple and so fine,—'For Valor.' It beats all the old Roman inscriptions for brevity and meaning. I'd give anything I possess to win it."

"You possess, Jim, the only thing that could win it. Don't I remember your cutting in through a crowd of cads in Brasenose Lane, and bringing off Charley Day of New? It's a pity you parsons haven't a chance of something of the sort."

"Well, I don't know, Ted; I'd give anything for a Victoria Cross, as I said just now, but it is n't a decoration for the clergy."

"Why not, Jim? From what your wife has said I am sure a fellow who has faced that awful cholera, as you did at Liverchester, is as plucky as any man who rode in the Light Brigade."

"It's our duty, Ted. There are certain things we are all of us called on to do in the line of our work. A parson might, perhaps, deserve praise for galloping up to a battery; it's not his work. But to do some special deed of daring for which you distinguish yourself among men who ride up to batteries as mere every-day business is something."

"Here's another way of looking at it, Jim. A soldier has a set of routine work, chiefly tending to the destruction of his fellow-creatures, which would be plucky work for any one not in the profession. A parson, as you say, might get mentioned with credit for charging a battery and cutting down a few gunners. But a parson's line of business, like an army-surgeon's, very often takes him where death and its horrors are just as close and thick as in the Light Brigade valley, only in a different form. In the case of parson and surgeon the risk is run for the benefit of his fellow-man. And that's a nobler form of courage; in fact, if you notice, the men who get the Victoria Cross in the Army and Navy gene-

rally get it for just the kind of work which you fellows are called on to perform as a matter of routine."

"What do you mean, Ted?"

"Why, I mean that the decoration is most often conferred on men who go out under fire to fetch in the wounded, or who rescue prisoners, or something of that sort."

"Should not you like to have the Victoria Cross, Ted?"

"I will have it whenever I get a chance, and that I've made up my mind to."

"It's not everybody who gets the chance, Ted, or the value of it would be lessened."

"That's true, and when the time comes for earning it, I hope I shall be thinking less of the threepenn'orth than of my duty."

"Well, I'll tell you what, you'll deserve a Victoria Cross almost if you face Charlwood."

"O, I'm not afraid of him. Here goes. Have an ambulance ready for the wounded, Jim."

So saying, Edward put on his hat and marched off towards the Manor-house.

James Harding sat down to begin his sermon. But he was obliged to lay down the pen before long. He could not bring his mind to his work. And no wonder.

He felt that Edward's visit to the Manor-house was but the beginning of a desperate war between himself and the squire; and he estimated the extent of that war, and how unpitifully it would be carried on. He felt certain that the squire would not listen to Edward. But he was not distressed about that, for if the young people really loved each other they had time to wait yet, and only needed patience, and then their love would come all the brighter out of the trial.

It was not for them that he feared, but for himself and the interests of the poor people who were to so great an extent dependent on him and on his relations with "the great house"; for whatever charities were doled out by Mr. Charlwood were administered by him, and any suspension of relations between him and the squire would intercept even that pittance, and then he would have to do what he could out of his own small means. But James Harding did not complain. He accepted his position without a murmur.

If ever a man deserved the Victoria Cross, it was this quiet, undemonstrative parson, whose eyes glittered and whose voice heightened as he spoke of the "threepenn'orth of bronze" just now. He had been "as one in suffering all, that suffers nothing."

From the time when he fought, hand to hand and foot to foot, that fierce battle with cholera in the back streets and alleys of by

Liverchester to this period, when he was combating ignorance and poverty and disease in outlying detachments scattered up and down his parish, he had never ceased to wear a courageous heart and a cheerful front, though the odds were very heavy against him, and victory was practically hopeless.

Now he saw an additional ally about to be joined to the already far superior number of his opponents. But he did not flinch nor fear. He even, as we see, hastened on the cause of the alliance. He might have chosen to wink at the engagement between Edward and Bella, but he was too plucky for that. He had right on his side, and that was the side to fight on; what did it matter to him if he fell in the ranks, a poor unnoticed private, striking his strongest and behaving his bravest? It was better to fall so, he was sure, than to be on the other side and advance, as the right was temporarily defeated. For there would come a time, he knew, when the falsely won laurels would be stripped from the brow of ill-doers, to be heaped on the graves of those who died for the right. Better late laurels than lost laurels,—better consciousness that whatever became of himself the cause must triumph, than any present success, to be followed by certain failure.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FORBIDDEN TO UNITE,—ORDERED TO REJOIN.

As Edward Harding marched up to the Manor-house for his interview with Squire Charlwood, he felt very like a soldier leading a forlorn hope into the imminent deadly breach. Under such circumstances even a brave man and a veteran may be excused a wish that every mile were twice as long as it is. The Manor-house was so near the parsonage, however, that even that could not have given Edward very much time for reflection.

He was quite prepared for a hot reception. He did not for a moment suppose that the old gentleman would listen to his suit. But he was in a little doubt as to how they should get through their interview. It was not how they would meet, but how they would part, that puzzled him. "I only hope I shall keep my temper with the old brute," said Edward to himself, which you will own was hardly the sort of sentiment a man should entertain towards one whom he is about to ask to become his father-in-law.

When Edward reached the gate of the

Manor-house he paused for a few moments. He had made up his mind what to say, and had, in fact, got a very pretty speech prepared. While he is standing at the gate reciting some very telling point about "service of his country,"—"the highest honors to be obtained by a conscientious performance of duty,"—"position and wealth within the reach of the humblest subaltern,"—he becomes aware of the fluttering of a bright, fresh morning-dress among the shrubs and flower-beds on the lawn. It is his Bella. He had almost entirely forgotten her existence in the nervous anxiety he felt about the right way in which he should ask to be permitted to unite it with his.

It occurs to him that, as she had so specially entreated him to conceal their engagement, and he is now about to divulge it, it would be as well to consult her on the subject.

How charming she looked! How artlessly she caressed the flowers, her fingers twinkling delightfully among the green leaves, the red roses with their reflected glow heightening the bloom on her cheeks and lips, as she drew them towards her to enjoy their musky perfume. She had on a dainty little hat with cherry ribbons,—just such a hat as a stage shepherdess wears. Her dress was a pure white muslin, sprinkled with tiny rosebuds, and she had a natty little apron that was merely an ornament, for it was too small to be useful. There never was a prettier sight than this artful beauty among the flowers. And then she was so unconscious of it, too! For of course she had not seen Edward coming from the parsonage! It is one of the delights of a small village that everybody overlooks everybody else. You had a capital view of the parsonage lawn from the upper windows of the Manor-house, and Bella, chancing to look out of the window of the housekeeper's room, spied her Edward sauntering across the grass; and guessing whither his steps would instinctively tend, had ample time to slip on the muslin gown, tie on the jaunty apron, pop the little hat on her head, and be apparently absorbed in the flowers long before Edward appeared at the gate. It was so artless, was it not?

Edward opened the gate noiselessly, and stole across the grass toward her. In her agitation, and from a strong desire to affect ignorance of his approach, she plunged wildly into admiration of a glorious staff of white lilies, those queen-flowers of the garden. But, like all queens, they should be admired at a distance. Bella sniffed at them with such close rapture that the tip of her saucy nose was covered with the

golden dust of the flower, and even the oveliest of women is not improved by having a yellow nose.

Edward crept up to her. "Bella, darling!"

"O Edward, is it you? How you frightened me!"

"Yes, I am here, *Bella mia*. There is no one looking,—so!"

Here there occurred a little passage of arms, Bella defending herself with a very slight show of resistance, and the frailest of parasol handles. The result was that a certain yellow smudge, attributable to the pollen of the white lily, or *L. candidum*, was common at once to Edward's cheek and Bella's nose. They both appeared so much better for the transfer that I am induced to believe that the medical qualities of this lily are not confined to the roots, which are "frequently employed," so say the learned, "as emollient poultices, owing to the mucilaginous matter which they contain." The application of the pollen to Edward's cheek had the immediate effect of making it a happy rose-color, while his eyes sparkled with a joy not altogether to be expected of a young gentleman who had only the wreck of a heart to bestow.

"What are you doing up here, Edward?" asks Bella, adjusting her hat, which has somehow got knocked off its perch. "Not come to see me, I am sure."

"Right, as usual!"

"Well," says the beauty, pouting, "it is not pretty to say so. But you are such a bear!"

Described as a bear by a lady, whom to contradict is to be impolite, what can poor Edward do but "behave as sich"?—and as his knowledge of natural history is limited, he can only hug, which he knows is the habit of the genus *Ursa*. When he has thus proved himself a bear with great satisfaction to himself, a transfer of more yellow dust to his cheek was observable with the naked eye.

"I'll box your ears, sir, if you don't behave better."

"If you will walk with bears you must excuse their affectionate manners!"

"Go along, you silly boy! And now tell me what brings you here? I do not know what papa would think if he saw you."

"My dear Bella, I have come here for the especial purpose of saving him the trouble of thinking. I have come to tell him everything."

Thereupon Bella gave a little squeak.

"O Edward, he won't hear of it. He will part us,—he will tear us from each

other, and leave us but the relics of our broken hearts to brood over alone and in silence."

(I think I ought to mark those words as a quotation of Bella's. I remember that bit about "brooding over the relics of a broken heart" in that delightful romance, *Adelina, or the Baron's Daughter*, and I know "alone and in silence" occurs in the high-spiced class of novel, *passim*.)

"My dearest Bella, I cannot consistently with honor conceal our attachment from him."

"Why will you sacrifice our happiness to a mistaken sense of honor, Edward? Surely in love and war all is fair?"

"Well, no,—not exactly. At least, there are circumstances which govern—that—in short, you can hardly understand the ties which—the reasons that induce me to take this step,—as an officer and a gentleman,—but you must take it for granted they are very strong."

"In short" and "in fact," to quote Edward's own words, I think he was much of Bella's opinion with regard to the fairness of stratagem in love and war. But his brother's position in the matter left him no alternative, and yet he did not like to confess to Bella that the step he took was not entirely at the promptings of his own conscience.

Bella did not quite see what answer to make to this rather rambling address of Edward's, so she betook herself to the usual refuge of women,—tears.

"It's very—hufsh!—very hard—hufsh!—that one's brightest hopes—hufsh!—are to be dashed—hufsh!—in the midst of all our—hufsh, hufsh!—happiness."

Of course when Bella began to cry there were more discursions into natural history and botany, and—more transfers of pollen, in fact.

"Come, come, Bella! You must not give way like this. We do not fear separation."

"O yes!—hufsh!—but then it's so hard to lose—hufsh!—those we love—hufsh!"

More essays in natural history and botany! And then came a footstep approaching on the gravel walk. They looked up, and lo and behold! there was the squire coming towards them with a red face indicative of terrible rage.

"By Jove! he's seen us!" was Edward's inward reflection, and he felt very uncomfortable.

"Law, how like the beginning of *Rank and Riches, or the Heir of Cloverleigh*,—how

curious!" thought Bella, who did not feel at all frightened, for if she had any active virtue, it was courage.

I think, on mature consideration, we will adopt the Parliamentary practice, and take Mr. Charlwood's address to Edward "as read." It would hardly bear setting down, for though the language was quite strong enough to run alone, I'm afraid it dealt too freely with torrid adjectives, references to Pandemonium, and invocations to the presiding genius of that locality, to admit of its being set down without such modifications as would entirely destroy its originality.

This was Bella's opportunity. She flung her arms round Edward, and plainly evinced a disposition to shield her lover at all hazards. She would not for one moment attempt to conceal their attachment. Indeed, that would have been absurd, for if the squire had not been looking at them for the last ten minutes from the library window, there were evidences in the shape of the pollen of the white lily on their faces that were too circumstantial to be disproved.

"By Jove! sir, I've a great mind to call my servants and have you kicked out of the house,—only it would disgrace that silly girl. Come away, you hussy! Leave him alone, and don't paw him over as if he were a pet puppy."

"I will not leave him. You may tear me from him, but you cannot divide our hearts."

"Go in doors, miss! I won't have any rebellion in my household. I never have had, and I won't begin now."

"I defy you! No parent can coerce his child's affection. I refuse to give up the man I love!"

"The man you—fiddlestick! What should a chit like you know about love? Go in doors, and go up to your own room. Do you hear me?"

"I do!"

"Then obey me this instant."

"Never again. You have attempted to control my heart, and I defy you! I renounce you!"

The squire made a step forward, as if to drag her from Edward by main force. Bella drew herself up with all the dignity of a tragedy queen. "One step nearer, and I strike!"

The weapon with which she threatened her father was nothing more formidable than her little garden parasol, but one would have thought it was a dagger, to judge from the fury of her words and the fierceness of her gesture. Indeed, the whole

thing would have been too ludicrous if the men had not been so much in earnest.

Edward interposed. Stepping between Bella and her infuriated parent, he said as calmly as he could,—

"Mr. Charlwood, I owe you an apology, and can therefore excuse the language you have applied to me. I was on my way to the house to tell you what you have now discovered for yourself. Unluckily, I lingered on the way when I met Miss Charlwood, and I must suffer the consequence in your belief that I have been clandestinely engaging her affections."

"O, you can talk, I dare say; but I'm not going to listen while that girl defies me."

"Bella, darling," whispered Edward, "for my sake—for both our sakes—obey him."

"Since you wish it, dearest," said Bella. She took both of his hands in hers, pressed them warmly, turned, and went in doors, where she watched the interview from behind the library curtains, ready at any moment to rush out and fling herself between the combatants.

It was hardly to be expected that Mr. Charlwood would be greatly appeased to see that his daughter, who refused to obey his parental commands, listened to the least word from Edward.

"Now, sir," he said, "what explanation can you give of this blackguardly conduct?"

"You will have the goodness to withdraw that word, sir."

"I'll see you blessed first!" said the squire; only "blessed" wasn't the word he used.

"Then I must withdraw it for you," said Edward, "excusing you to myself on the ground of your want of acquaintance with the habits of polite society."

"You'll do nothing of the sort, sir. But tell me what you mean by skulking about my premises, trying to sneak into my daughter's affections, like your beggarly brother did into those of Mr. What's-his-name's niece,—his wife, you know,—though, luckily, it was biter bit there. And so it will be here, young man, for deuce a shilling will you get with her!"

"I came here, sir, as a gentleman, to speak to a gentleman, not to bandy words with a blackguard, to borrow your own elegant phraseology. If you choose to talk like a rational human being, instead of a raving lunatic, or the keeper of the local beerhouse, I shall be happy to lay before you my prospects and intentions in asking your daughter's hand."

"As a gentleman, is it, you come? Caught making love to her on the sly, just as I should catch a chap robbing my hen-roost or poaching my preserves; only he'd be too honest, even then, to say he intended honorably."

"I see it is useless to attempt to argue with you, and childish to hope that you will listen to me in a gentlemanly spirit. I have told you I was on the way to the house, when I met Miss Charlwood and was detained. I now tell you what I was on the road to tell you then,—I love your daughter, have reason to believe that my love is returned, and would ask your permission to become her recognized suitor."

"May I ask," said the squire with mocking calmness, "what your means are? You are aware, of course, that the whole of my property goes to my son,—that I do not mean to give my daughter a shilling?"

"I am the more glad to hear it, sir; for at least it clears my suit of the only objection to it that even you could find. It cannot be mercenary in that case."

"That depends on how long you have known my determination, which, I may as well mention, I have only known myself since her rebellious conduct here just now. But there is one other consideration. Since she has no money or property, it becomes my duty to see that her intended husband has both. May I ask what your means are?"

Now was the time for poor Ted's great speech. But, alas! it was not forthcoming. He could only stammer out something about having a prospect before him; great men had risen from small beginnings by application; the highest honors in his profession were open to all; he would, at least merit, if he did not gain, preferment.

"But that won't keep a wife. I had a brother in the army, sir, and he was no beggar with Lord knows how many debts tied round his neck. But he died an old grayheaded captain on half-pay. That for your preferment!" and he snapped his fingers in Edward's face. "Have you any other recommendations," he continued, "besides insolence, beggary, and debt? Because, if so, let me have 'em before my patience runs out, and I have you kicked down that gravel walk."

Edward's blood was up now.

"You old scoundrel!" he said, stepping up to the old man with such evident anger that he shrank back a bit. "You are Bella's father, or I should have shaken the blaspheming old life out of you half an hour ago. Just have the goodness to call a few

of your fellows here, and I'll really thank you, for, by Jove! you've got the fight up in me, and it would do me all the good in the world to pitch into them, though I should be sorry to hurt people whose only fault is that they are in the service of a man like yourself. You miserable old man! I pity you. I don't envy you the wealth and property that give you an opportunity of doubling your own condemnation. Go, walk through that village there, and answer to your conscience, if you can, for the state in which those wretched people live. I'd rather be the poor man I am than the wealthy murderer you are. As for my attachment to your daughter, you can't kill that, thank Heaven, as you can your unhappy tenants. I can trust in her as she does in me, and we defy you!"

"If you're caught loitering about these premises, I'll have you ducked, as sure as you're alive."

"Never fear, sir. When I come I shall come openly."

"You'll precious quick go out again; and as for not coming secretly, didn't I catch you to-day?"

It was no use bandying words with the squire any longer. So Edward raised his hat to him stiffly, looked towards the house, and, seeing Bella at the window, kissed his hand to her with fervor. She understood the action, and, opening the library window, — a French one, — came bounding gracefully over the lawn.

"What has passed, dearest Edward?"

"What has passed?" said her father. "Why, he says it's no use running after you if I won't give you any money, and so he's going."

"You know me better than that, Bella?"

"O yes, Edward. But what has happened?"

"Your father will not listen to me, and forbids me the house!"

"But he cannot separate our hearts, Edward. We can still defy him!" and she struck a tragic attitude.

At this moment there came upon the scene no less a personage than Martha Ogleby.

"Please, sir," said she, with a calm face, quite unperturbed by the too evident storm that was raging around her, — "please, sir, Mr. Harding, sir, there'm a boy from telegruff want to see you p'tickler, and missis have a-sent me to find 'ee."

It was out of the question, in the presence of Martha Ogleby, — who appeared to be under the impression that, having been sent for Edward, she ought to take him away with her, as she used to do the clothes in

her early youth, — to continue the discussion.

So Edward and Bella parted with a warm, long, lingering clasp of the hand ; and then the former lifted his hat to the squire, who bowed stiffly, and thus the interview came to an end.

"What's the boy like?" asked Edward of Martha, as they left the Manor-house.

"A kind o' sojer, I reck'n, for he've a band to his cap and a stripe down his legs, sir."

"Where did you say he came from?"

"From telegruff, sir, down to railway station, sir."

Edward hurried home at once. A few minutes afterwards he rushed into the nursery, where Prue and her husband were devoting themselves to intense admiration of their little one as she sprawled about the floor.

"Jim! Prue! I'm off. The sepoys have mutinied in India, and I have immediate orders to rejoin my regiment. Mr. Martindale has kindly telegraphed to me privately, to give me early notice. I must be off without delay."

"And Bella?" asked Prudence.

"Bid her good by for me, — perhaps forever! For her father has forbidden our engagement, and I must go away without bidding her farewell."

"Edward, trust to me," said the good, courageous little Prue. "I will watch over her, and be a sister to her while you are away. You can trust me, can't you?"

"Yes, you best of women!" said Ted, pressing her hand. "I would trust you with my life and my love. Take care of her and comfort her, poor girl!"

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SQUIRE'S MALEDICTIONS.

WITH the first dawn of the day succeeding that on which the events told in the last chapter befell, Edward Harding was astir. He had busied himself till late at night with his packing, and he had barely had forty winks ere there came a tap at the window, and Thomas, the gardener, told him the pony carriage was waiting for him. He had some distance to drive to the railway, and wished to catch the morning mail to town.

So he descended and unbarred the door, and let Thomas in to help him to carry his luggage down stairs. By the time this was done, Martha Ogleby made her appearance with a cup of warm tea and a bit of toast,

which had been prepared in the nursery by Prudence. It was very welcome, for the morning was cold and misty, one of those dank, dark dawns that usher in the finest days, but which pierce to the very marrow of the luckless bird whom cruel Fate compels to be abroad early enough to catch the first worm.

Edward gulped down the tea, and crunched the toast, — you see it was good toast that Prue made, or "crunch" would not be applicable to the case, — and then he wrapped himself up in his cloak and rug, and bundled into the pony-trap beside Thomas. Thomas disdained wraps. He was attired in his usual garb, with a great deal of shirt-front, and nothing particular by way of necktie. But Thomas was used to getting up early, and had become hardened to the morning air, which seemed to Edward to be simply cold-drawn essence of rheumatism.

Ted kissed his hand towards the nursery window, then towards the Manor-house, and after that said, "All right, Tom." Thereupon Bobbin, the pony, who, though a little queer in his off fore-leg, was a regular trotter, jumped forward as if he were going right out of the shafts. Then he settled to his pace, and went peg-peg-pegging along the quiet road, wrapped in gray mist, through which a something that might be sunlight was beginning to make itself felt. Up the hill out of Bremning Minor, under the avenue of chestnuts in Carptray Lane, and then out on the high road. How the little nag spanked along!

It was clearing off a bit. The distant hills loomed like ghosts in the distance, and in the valley below the tree-tops and church spires were emerging from the spectral swathes of vapor. The hedges, sparkling all over with drops of night moisture, were plainly discernible; a little while ago they were like a row of squatting crones with spiky hair, while the trees, with their limbs flung across the road, were like the ghosts of cursing giants. Now you could distinguish their forms, and could tell the elms from the beeches, and the ashes from the limes.

Presently a few laboring men going afield were passed; then came a drover with some cattle; anon a market-cart; then a gig. Man was going forth to his work and to his labor, and day was broadening, — kept broadening until the gray curtain was withdrawn, and the fresh landscape stretched away on all sides. Yonder was a windmill, where the early miller had set his sails going already. Down that valley the smoke was rising from the cottage chimneys, — breakfast betimes. And how green and

velvety were the meadows and pastures where the cattle were lowing and the sheep bleating! There was the twitter of birds, too, with the notes of a lark somewhere over the cornfield beyond the brook. Day had begun in real earnest.

Ted dearly loved the country, and enjoyed the sights and sounds he noted in his early drive.

But how came he to be thinking of them? Surely he should have been musing on his Bella. Perhaps he ought, but he was not. Without intending to accuse him of being a humbug, I can't help thinking if either James or Prudence had been present he would have been surrounded with a tender air of melancholy, which he certainly did not think it worth his while to assume for the edification of Thomas.

The old saying that every man possesses two distinct individualities is never truer than when it is applied to a man in love. There are inconsistencies in Edward's conduct that I can explain in no other way.

There was one Edward Harding who yesterday afternoon was so warm in his devotion to Bella Charlwood, so stern in his determination to make her his some day, so convinced that nothing could separate their hearts.

There was the Edward Harding who this morning had forgotten everything save how pleasant a cigar was in the cool dawn, and how jolly the country looked stepping out of the fog to see him pass.

Let me see, was not there a third Edward Harding a little while ago, — an Edward Harding with nothing but the miserable reversion of a broken heart to bestow? An Edward Harding who did n't much care for Bella, but, having felt the pangs of misplaced love, was ready to feign affection rather than consign her to lifelong misery? An Edward Harding who thought it rather a bore than otherwise to have to go and talk to the squire about an engagement? I'm rather inclined to think there was such an E. H. not many hours ago.

Where was he now? not to speak it profanely, which is, in parody of the *vox populi*, or slang of the streets. Where was he now? Defunct! And if a coroner's jury had to sit upon him, I hope, for the sake of one of the great pillars of the British Constitution, — I mean the maxim that "twelve heads are better than one," — that they would have found Squire Charlwood guilty of killing him. He did it. O, undoubtedly he did! The moment he set his face against the engagement, and most especially at the moment when he laughed at the utter impossibility of the two young people

really caring enough for one another to bear a long engagement, Edward Harding, the careless and cold, died and was buried beneath that sneer.

If a man loves a woman, or a woman a man, his or her affection may or may not outlive a long engagement. But if any one, particularly a friend, ventures to doubt the possibility of its so surviving, I think you may safely bet on its tenacity of life in nine cases out of ten. Pride has so much more vital energy than love.

In the place of Edward Harding, with the reversion of a broken heart to be disposed of to the highest bidder, there came into life Edward Harding the devoted and attached fiancé of Bella Charlwood. But at times, when there was no particular irritation of the bumps of affection or pride, that E. H. retired into private life and put up the shutters, and the senior partner, the E. H. who thought life jolly and cigars very pleasant companions, carried on the business.

By the time daylight had pronounced itself very decidedly and clearly, the railway station hove in sight. In another ten minutes Thomas had driven up to the booking-office, and two or three porters, evidently fresh and just on to the day's work, were hauling Edward's baggage out of the vehicle. Edward got out and stretched his legs a bit up and down the platform, after taking his ticket.

There was nobody stirring except two bagmen and the officials, and it was rather slow. But, fortunately, those benefactors of melancholy mankind, the advertisers, had provided amusement for Edward. He learnt that the reason why Archimedes jumped out of his bath and ran along the streets in a state of nature, shouting "I have found it!" was that he had invented a new pattern for a shirt. He was pictorially appealed to as one who kept a cow, a horse, a sheep, a pig, or a dog. He made the acquaintance of a young lady with long light hair, who was brushing her hair with a modified form of galvanic battery, and he was introduced to another young lady, who was also doing her hair in an ingeniously disposed couple of mirrors, which must have repeated the reflections of the back and front of her head until the repetition became almost intoxicating. He gazed in admiration of a pair of such marvellously cut trousers that no human legs could ever have adapted themselves to them, and that consequently had to stand alone. He furthermore inspected lovely views of marine spots of great magnificence, which the letter-press beneath informed him were meant

for a neighboring fishing-village that desired to be a watering-place, and was as much like one as these views were like it.

He was also, by way of cheerful preparation for his journey, invited to insure his life for a penny, which would also cover damages to legs and arms. He got a little bewildered here in trying to discover why your life was, when you travelled second-class, only half as valuable as it was when you travelled first. And before he had quite worked out this social problem, and long before he had half exhausted the stock of amusement and information supplied by the advertising benefactors of the travelling solitary, there was a scampering to and fro of porters, and a frantic ringing of bells, and then the morning mail came gliding in to the platform.

"Scalperton! Scalperton!" cried the porter. At least, he was by courtesy supposed to call that. He really said, "Scat'n."

A very sleepy gentleman turned out, yawning as if he were trying to turn himself inside out through his throat. Another sleepy gentleman put his head out in a travelling head-gear very like a nightcap, and asked for the morning paper.

"Any more going on? Now, then, sir, take your place," said the guard, and Edward was bundled in with his sticks, wraps, and hat-box into a first-class carriage. In another minute the train was under way again.

A few hours later in this same morning, when James was reading his morning paper and Prue was making breakfast, and after Prue the second had gone through the process of being dipped in her bath,—with less resemblance to a lobster than would have occurred to you had you seen her in the earlier part of her career,—when all the important events at the vicarage of Bremning Minor were either over or in progress, an event happened which caused as much surprise as if a thunderbolt had come down the chimney into baby's pap.

There came a ring at the front door, and Martha Ogleby—recognized by the invariable habit which one of her slippers had of coming down at heel—answered the summons. Then there was the sound of setting down boxes.

"That muff has missed his train," said James, quietly.

"Or perhaps he has received another telegram to say he need not go," said Prue.

Enter Martha Ogleby. Not a twinkle of wonder illuminated her eye, which would have credited a codfish. Not the slightest of wonders struggling for utterance made her weak mouth look like an O.

"Please, 'm, 't be Miss Challood!" said Martha, as if she were ushering in James's matutinal eggs or the milk.

James and his wife both started.

Yes,—it was Bella, with a cried face, and the daintiest of morning wrappers.

"Why, what has happened?" asked Prue.

Thereupon Bella burst into tears, and flung herself on Prue's neck.

"Tell me, Bella, what is it?"

"O, it's pup-pup-pupapa. He's gug-gug-gugone and bub-bub-broken off our engug-gug-gugagement, and it'll bub-bub-bubbreak our hearts, and now he's cuc-cuc-cursed me and tut-tut-turned me out of du-du-du-dudoors!" Here the weeping became almost hysterical.

"Turned you out of doors! Impossible!" said James.

Bella shook her head.

"Nun-nun-nuno! He's tut-tut-tuturned me off fuf-fuf-fuf-fuforever. He says he'll be ded-ded-ded—" (James began to be alarmed at this sentence, and thought in distress Bella was about to be too exact as to her father's expressions, but the conclusion set his mind at rest) "ded-dedefied no lul-lul-lulonger."

"There, Bella, dear, calm yourself. Don't give way so much. It will come all right. Don't cry!" said Prue.

Bella gradually allowed herself to be pacified, and then explained how all had happened. Of course her account of the transaction was not altogether impartial and unbiassed, but it was probably something like the truth, and if so, old Charlwood's conduct had been simply brutal. To be sure, such a lifelong tyrant was not exactly the sort of man to take very quietly the sudden disobedience of his daughter. But when she was obliged, in order to escape a beating, to run away and lock herself in her bedroom, it was carrying parental anger too far. A parley which took place after this was conducted with considerable warmth, and the upshot was that Bella was given till this morning to consider.

"If you don't," said Mr. Charlwood, "give up that puppy altogether, and beg my pardon by nine o'clock to-morrow, I'll pack you off, and never give you a shilling as long as I live."

I should have mentioned that I have divested this proposition of a great many adjectives, expletives, and particularly active verbs, which, though they lent vitality and force to the squire's oratory, might not look quite so well on paper.

At nine o'clock—probably just about

the time when her Edward was coiling himself up for a nap on the cushions of the railway carriage — Bella was summoned to the library. She was asked for her decision, and she boldly stated her determination to be true to the man to whom she had plighted her troth. Another storm followed, which ended in the squire's cursing his disobedient child, and bidding her quit his roof.

How far Bella was impressed — in spite of her tears — by this terrible denunciation may be judged from the fact that she afterwards admitted to Prudence, — who was a little horrified, — that the scene had reminded her very much of the interview between Marmaduke Mortimer and his father in the second volume of *Edith Valery*, or *the Baron's Malediction*.

James and Prudence were very awkwardly placed. If Bella had run away from her father's roof, they would have had no difficulty in deciding what was their duty. But when he himself drove her out of doors they could not send her back.

James adjourned to his study, to think the matter over, leaving Prue to comfort Bella. He was horribly worried at the new turn events had taken. He felt that Edward and Bella were right, and he knew the squire was wrong, and yet they were not so right, and he was not so wrong, that strict justice could pronounce decidedly in favor of either. Edward had acted honorably, and the squire had behaved like a savage. Yet, after all, a father has a right to object to have his daughter committed to a long engagement before she is twenty-one. He has also a right to exact obedience from his child. What was to be done? Poor James was quite at a loss, and heartily wished Bella Charlwood had never been born. On the other hand, I am afraid Prue was inwardly rejoicing at Bella's being thus placed under her care and immediate supervision. Prue was not the sort of person to undertake a charge lightly, or, having undertaken it, to neglect it. She had had Bella intrusted to her by Ted on his departure for India, and she had made up her mind to mount guard over that amiable damsel like a dragon.

As soon as she had soothed Bella's agitated feelings, she stepped out of the room and came to James's study.

"Well, my philosophical boy, what is to be done?"

"Well, you sage girl, I don't know. But I think I must go and talk to the squire. What a scandal it will be! I fear my influence in the parish will suffer, for they will think I am encouraging domestic rebellion. I fear it will do harm. But it can't

be helped. At any rate I must try and talk the squire round if possible."

Prue agreed that this was the correct thing to do, and accordingly James started on his peace-making errand to the Manor-house.

He found the squire pacing up and down the library like a wild beast, and the first words that greeted him were abusive ones aimed at his brother. James, however, had been prepared for this, and had schooled himself to bear taunt and insult sooner than abandon his mission. He talked to the old gentleman quietly, and argued the matter dispassionately.

"What would Mr. Charlwood's friends and neighbors say?"

Mr. Charlwood did not care a curse, — and he cared very little for curses, if we may judge from the lavish way in which he threw them about, even in the presence of a clergyman.

"He had better take his daughter back, and try a milder form of treatment. She might be persuaded, but not driven to think as her father wished her. Before there was any scandal abroad he had better take her home again," urged James.

Whereupon Mr. Charlwood lost all patience and all restraint. Edward, he vowed, was copying James. He was trying to sneak off with a wealthy and foolish girl, in spite of the wishes of her relations. He could see that, could Mr. Charlwood, and he could see too that James was only persuading him to take his disobedient child back because it would ruin his brother's game as a speculation if her father discarded her.

Even quiet James could not put up with this in silence. He rebuked the squire for his violence, which led him to say things that were false; and he spoke so very plainly his opinion of the squire's conduct in the matter that the old gentleman became almost beside himself with rage.

"I don't think that you're quite aware, you money-snatching parson, that you're my servant, — mine!"

James admitted that he was not aware of it.

"Then let me tell you you are! Two hundred a year of your salary is paid you as chaplain to the Manor-house, and on condition of your performing daily service in the chapel. There is no chapel now, for I've turned it into the stables. So, by George, you can't perform the conditions, and you sha'n't have the pay."

James was thunderstruck. But it was quite true, though both the squire and J. Middleborough had said nothing about it. By one of those delightful muddles and

incongruities the income of the incumbent of Brenning Minor was a combination of two sums. He got two hundred a year as chaplain to the Manor-house, and one as the curate of the parish.

This was a serious matter. The squire kept his word, and poor James submitted the case to an eminent lawyer. But there was no help for it, — Mr. Charlwood really possessed the sole power of nomination, and he had not legally presented James, and so could turn him out any day. So James and Prue had to submit to lose two thirds of their income at one blow. They groaned, but paid. It was a struggle.

"Well," thought Prue, "I must work all the harder with my pen, that's all. I wonder when my novel will be out?"

CHAPTER XX.

A RISING BARRISTER.

VERY pleasant rooms in the Temple indeed were those of Philip Charlwood. They looked across the gardens to the river, — a pleasant outlook.

They were luxuriously furnished, and in very good taste. He was a polished gentleman, was Philip Charlwood, in which respect he was better than his father, you will probably think, and you will be right.

The rooms are wainscoted with old oak, which throws out finely the proofs and select prints that in massive but quiet frames adorn the walls. The curtains are of rich maroon cloth, with a broad gold band for border, and looped up with a cord and tassels of dead gold. There is no gilt cornice with brass curtain-rods. They are hung from behind a deep silk fringe, also of maroon, with small gold beads at the end of each tag. This fringe goes all round the room, taking the place of a cornice. It conceals the rod from which the pictures are suspended. Each picture is hung with two fine wires, which go up perpendicularly in lines parallel to the upright divisions of the panelling to the concealed rod. By this means there are no cords cutting those upright lines at angles, as would be the case in the ordinary mode of picture-hanging, — that is, by a loop of cord over a nail. All pictures are hung "on the line." The spaces above them are occupied with bits of sombre armor, rare specimens of porcelain, and ivory carvings. Between the pictures, on little oak brackets, are a few choice casts from the antique in Parian.

A low settee, with cushions as plump and soft as young partridges, runs all round the

room, at least where there are no doors or cupboards.

The bookcase, instead of standing against the wall, is an octagonal pedestal, each side about two feet high. It is surmounted by a large candelabrum of brass and Venetian glass, its branches filled with wax candles. It moves easily on casters over the thick pile of the Turkey carpet. A child might push it to any part of the room where a reference to any book on its shelves was needed.

Easy chairs and lounges of every description would crowd the room if it were not a large one, and if they had not been so admirably arranged as not to be in the way anywhere. They, like the cushions of the settee, are covered with maroon cloth — not velvet, it is too clinging and hot — with dead gold fringe.

The carpet, I have said, is a Turkey carpet. To tread on it is like walking on the mossy, springy turf of some well-kept ancient lawn. Its color is one of those happy combinations of bright hues which delight but do not dazzle, and give, as a whole, an effect of subdued warm brown.

The ceiling is an old-fashioned painted ceiling. Age has toned it down to a pleasant sombreness.

There is a large bay-window, which is divided from the room by curtains. The sashes open down to the floor. This forms a sort of smoking alcove, and it is fitted up in the Eastern style. There are no chairs, but piles of fat well-to-do cushions, which the smoker can arrange to his comfort as he chooses. Small trays, just large enough to hold a cup of coffee and a cigar-ash-holder, are suspended against the wall from telescopic brass rods, which, drawing out horizontally, give accommodation for the smoker wherever he may happen to sit. A punkah which is moved by clock-work hangs overhead to waft away the smoke if necessary. In the centre of the window is a small fountain with a porcelain basin, into which the water falls with a pleasant tinkle when the jet is playing.

I should have mentioned that in the large apartment there were two small basin shells, the one of silver, the other of porcelain, in small niches in the walls. Into these, from marble dolphins' heads, fell a tiny thread of perfumed water with an agreeable music.

The bedroom was fitted up with equal taste, and in much the same sort of style. There, however, the hangings were rose-color, and the furniture ebony inlaid with mother-of-pearl. The dressing-table was covered with toilet necessities and toilet

luxuries. All the fittings were of tortoise-shell inlaid with mother-of-pearl. The mirror was an oval one with a splendidly designed gilt frame, supported with silver cupids, and draped gracefully with lace. The bed was a species of hammock. It was a net of stout silk cord, stretched—not tightly—on an iron frame, which was suspended at the four corners by broad bands of some elastic material, that fastened with hooks into rings in the ceiling. A more luxurious couch, or one that would adapt itself more readily and comfortably to the movements and positions of its occupant, it would be impossible to conceive.

What chambers for a lawyer's practice! you say, perhaps. But they were not the business chambers of Philip Charlwood. Those grimy offices were situate in Pump Court, and were as dull, dingy, and depressing as they had need be. It was there Philip spent his mornings. His afternoons and nights were passed in the sylvan splendours I have been trying to describe.

He was a man with a strongly developed bump of order, was Philip Charlwood. His rooms were a proof of it. Not a picture was hung a hair's breadth crooked. Not a book was out of place on the shelves. All things were arranged most symmetrically,—even an apparent negligence which here and there gave a piquancy was governed by rule and measure. Not a rose-leaf in this couch of rose-leaves must be crumpled, or Philip's delight in it would fly forever.

He is most successful at the bar, owing almost entirely to his gift of order. His brain is like his room. There is not the slightest confusion there, though perhaps it is not so well furnished. He arranges his arguments and lays out his work,—his points, and rejoinders, and pleas,—and knows just where to go for them when he wants them. "Go to Charlwood," say the lawyers whenever any very intricate case presents itself. People say he must get his Q. C. before long, and no one doubts that he will reach the bench. And a capital judge he will make.

He has worked very hard indeed, and has made a great deal of money, for even the handsome allowance he has from his father wants considerable eking out from other sources to enable him to indulge his extravagant tastes. He has compiled law books that have sold well and attracted considerable attention, and he has contributed some able critical papers to the legal reviews.

He has made many acquaintances, almost all of them well worth knowing, either for position or qualities.

One of his chief friends is Marcus Ly-

saght, who is shortly to be Earl of Mountgarret, for his father, it is calculated, cannot live many years upon neat whiskey, even at such a healthy place as Ballygarret, county Tipperary. Marcus Lysaght, the honorable, is a harmless sort of young man. He has little of the Irish "divvle," but a good deal of the Irish dawdle, about him. He was sent over to enter the Inner Temple because the old earl had a great notion of Templars, derived principally from the *Spectator* (I mean the *Spectator* to which Dicky Steele was, not that to which Mr. Tom Brown is, a contributor). But Marcus, somehow, had not, during a residence of four years, contrived to keep more than one term. The chief qualification to be called to the bar and permitted to practise as a counsel in courts of law consists, as most of my readers are probably aware, in the eating of a certain number of dinners for a certain number of terms. And Marcus never could manage to eat these dinners. He generally spent a good deal of time in Ireland during the shooting, and at the West End during the season; and the result was he ran his dinners so fine that they had to be done in the last few days of term, and he was sure to be too late for one if not more of the requisite number, and so lost his term. Fortunately, it did not matter.

How it was that Philip Charlwood and he became such close friends and allies it is impossible to account for, except in the way in which we explain the reason why some men choose for wives the women we should have thought least suited to their tastes. Their dispositions were so entirely different, that by force of contrast they admired each other.

However, it is time that I should get on with my story.

Philip Charlwood is taking his early cup of chocolate and his letters in bed. As he turns the letters over and inspects the handwritings, he comes on a missive from his father.

"Hullo! here's the governor taking the trouble to write. It must be something important!"

He breaks the seal and begins to read. At first he smiles. Then he looks grave. And by the time he has finished the perusal he looks angry.

"Confound the old fool! He ought to have known better, for he has had a daughter these nineteen years, and I have n't had one at all, and yet I should n't have made such a stupid mistake."

He meditates a little,—then he rereads the letter,—says "the stupid old fool!" once more,—which is not at all proper,

since by those terms he means his father, — are, then, rings for his valet and proceeds to dress.

When he has performed that operation to his entire satisfaction, he adjourns to the next room, where he takes his breakfast. All this is done quite methodically and gravely. Even the vagaries of "the stupid old fool" are not permitted to derange the morning customs of Philip Charlwood.

Breakfast over, Philip goes into the bay-window and flings himself down on the cushions for his morning cigar and his morning meditations. Chaffers, his clerk, who has been trained into the nicest punctuality by his master, knocks at the door at the very moment that his master has arranged himself on the cushions to his satisfaction.

Chaffers brings the two briefs on which Philip is engaged for this day. Philip glances at the first, "*Toggleton v. Pomtrow*," opens it, runs it over, turns to the outside again, and sees, "With you, Mr. Fuffy."

"Chaffers, step round to Mr. Fuffy, and ask him if he will be good enough to come and consult with me at eleven at the office."

Then he opens and reads, more carefully, the other brief, "*Dickery v. Moon*." It is an intricate case of disputed title. In about a quarter of an hour he has digested it and laid out its bones, carefully ticketed, in his chamber of mnemonics. Then he calls for a *Bradshaw*. It is brought him by his clerk, and he finds that a train at two-fifty will take him down to Brenning Minor in time for dinner, — or, to be precise (one must be careful with so particular a gentleman as Philip), to Scalperton, whence he can post to Brenning Minor in time for dinner.

He then calculates the chances of his despatching the case of "*Dickery v. Moon*" by that hour, and comes to the conclusion that if a certain objection he has got laid out ready for use in one corner of his brain is not overruled he can manage it easily. As for "*Toggleton v. Pomtrow*," his junior must look after that. What do big men get enormous fees for, unless it be to give their juniors an opportunity of distinguishing themselves in important cases?

At eleven Philip supplied Mr. Fuffy with everything needed to win the victory in the case of "*Toggleton v. Pomtrow*," — except the brain to understand and the memory to retain what he tells him.

By one Philip has fired off the great objection in the case of "*Dickery v. Moon*," and it has been held good after about a quarter of an hour's skirmishing, in which

the judge, who eventually gave it to Philip, took up every possible argument against, which Philip was glad to see, for then he knew the learned baron meant to decide in his favor.

By two-fifty Philip has reached the station, has taken his place in the train, and is being whirled away to Scalperton.

But between one-fifteen and two-fifty what has he been doing? He has been smoking a cigar in Temple Gardens, and arranging his programme for his visit to Brenning Minor.

On his way to his rooms to pick up his portmanteau he calls on Marcus Lysaght. That young gentleman has not made up his mind yet, having been at a ball last night.

"All right, old fellow," says Philip, "I don't want to disturb you. You know term ends to-morrow, and I've no more causes, so I'm off home for a few days. Now look here, — are you engaged anywhere about now?"

"No, I ain't booked for anything till next month."

"All right. I have n't been down to the governor's for an age, so I must go alone to get over the domestic tendernesses. But will you hold yourself in readiness and engaged to follow me the day after to-morrow?"

"Shall be delighted, old chap."

"Done, then! Good by!"

"Good by!"

"Yes," says Philip to himself as he goes down stairs, "I think that will give me time enough."

When he reaches Brenning Minor he finds his father in a state of chronic ill-humor, which is a thing that Philip can no more stand than he can understand. Ill-humor is a derangement, and he hates anything disorderly.

So he protests against it, and tells his father that he has come down on purpose to smooth over this little difficulty with "that blessed girl," but that he won't do it if there is any thunderstorm business.

The squire is a little afraid of Philip, so he softens out the wrinkles somewhat, and gets chirpy even, when Philip promises to set the whole thing straight over a bottle of port after dinner. So after dinner the squire fills himself a glass of his very rarest old port, and passes the decanter to his son.

Philip understands the signal, and draws his chair up to the end of the table where his father is, and taking up the nutcrackers as if they were a brief, makes a slight flourish with them and opens.

"First of all, sir, I suppose you see

only from this folly that Bella has lived at an age when it will be well to assign her to some eligible suitor!"

The father nodded.

"You have none such in your eye?"

The father shook his head.

"That's right!"—a wave of the nutcrackers—"because I have."

The old gentleman looks at him attentively.

"He's an earl. That is, he will be in a year's time at the outside,—an Irish earl, Lord Mountgarret. Well born, wealthy, agreeable, and a great chum of mine. Will that do?"

"Yes, if we can only get this cursed nonsense out of her nonsensical noddle, the pussy!"

"So far so well," says Philip, ticking off points one mentally. "Now for the next thing. Where's this young fellow,—what's his name?"

"Harding. He has been ordered to join his regiment in India."

"Good. And where's Bella?"

"At the parson's, Harding's brother, who encourages her, and—"

"All right. We'll settle that another time. You told her to leave the house?"

"I did."

"Then you must send me to fetch her back again. Harshness is n't a bit of use with a woman,—especially such a one as Bella. We've all the devil's own tempers for obstinacy,—you know that well enough. My only wonder is that you did n't drive her into an elopement with him. Easy does it. We'll get her back here, treat her more kindly than ever, and then we'll bring Lysaght on the scene. She is only a silly, romantic girl, who falls in love after the mode taught in those blessed novels she has stuffed her noddle with. She'll forget this What's-his-name in a little while, and if Lysaght only makes play, he'll cut him down by the beginning of term. Don't you see the game?"

The squire does see the game, and cannot but admit that it is ingenious enough, though it goes sorely against the grain to pardon Bella and ask her to return.

"But you are settling all this without your friend's knowledge. Supposing Bella does n't suit him?"

"Supposing she does n't, he would n't mind flirting with her a bit to oblige me and to wean her from that folly. But he and I are very old chums indeed, and it has been a sort of joking arrangement for years that he is to marry my sister. He has seen portraits of her, and the notion begun in half jest has ended in real earnest, and

unless I am very much mistaken Bella will be Countess of Mountgarret before she dies. But I must go and call on Bella at the parson's. What sort of fellow is he!"

The squire gives his notion of James Harding's character, and tells Philip that he has docked the two hundred a year.

Philip thinks it over, and weighs the pros and cons with great nicety. At last he says—

"Yes, you must stick to that. I should n't have advised you to do it, but as it is done you must not withdraw, or the beggar will think you have not the right, which being, I fancy, doubtful, you must stick to your position the more firmly in order to put a good face on it. Besides, this will keep up a coolness between this house and the parsonage, which is desirable, for of course they would fight their brother's battle against Lysaght. Besides, two hundred a year is two hundred a year, and I know a poor barrister who would be deuced glad of it,—he'd be able to keep a private Hansom then, and perhaps a park hack."

"I'll tell you what it is, Philip, you've got a fairish allowance, as it is, but I'm cursed if you sha' n't have the other two hundred if you settle all this matter satisfactorily. Yes, by Jove! you shall; and if your friend, Earl Lysaght—no, Mountgarret I mean, marries her, you shall have a couple more on the wedding-day."

"Then, egad," said Philip to himself, "he shall marry her, whether he likes it or not!"

I am afraid Philip Charlwood was slightly m

CHAPTER XXI.

PHILIP CHARLWOOD, PEACEMAKER.

AT the earliest reasonable hour on the morning after his arrival at Bremning Minor, Philip Charlwood presented himself at the parsonage. Arrived at the front gate, he found Martha Ogleby watching Prue the second picking daisies on the lawn.

"Is Mr. Harding in?" asked Philip, with a fascinating smile that was entirely thrown away, Martha's impenetrable and imperturbable nature having a great deal of the duck's back about it, in its relations even to flattery.

"Es, I b'lieve, sir," was the reply, with the immediate further addition,— "Don't 'ee do that, pretty dear!" This was not addressed to Philip, nor did it arise from his offering a salute, or any such gallantry. It was intended for baby, who, being at this early period of her existence a little back-

ward in natural history, appeared to be under the impression that she was a graminivorous animal, and was making a light repast of daisies and dandelions. I don't know that there's any harm in daisies, and I am aware that dandelion, under the medicinal *nom de guerre*, *taraxacum*, is highly beneficial in certain cases. But as a baby with a liver complaint would be a strange anomaly, I think Martha was quite right in leaving Philip a moment while she extracted the blossoms, an operation to which little Prue strongly objected.

Philip waited patiently till the difficulty was adjusted. His long experience as a barrister, in managing stupid and refractory witnesses, had made a forensic Job of him. When the last daisy had been disgorged, he returned to the charge.

"Will you take that in to Mr. Harding for me with my compliments, and say I should like five minutes' conversation with him?" said he, holding out his card.

"'Es, sure," said Martha, "if 'ee don't mind watchin' of baby while I go."

"Only too happy," said Philip.

Thereupon Martha seized the card, imprinting in so doing on one corner a black thumb-mark which Thomas Bewick would have engraved with delight and interest.

"Doan't 'ee let she ate none of thosemy," she added as a parting injunction, pointing to some red berries on a shrub.

Keeping to the last minute a retrospective eye on baby, and thereby nearly bringing up suddenly against the doorpost instead of entering the door, Martha Ogleby took in Philip's card.

She knocked very gently at the study, where James was engaged on his sermon.

"Come in!" said James, hastily, and then, seeing who it was, he asked, "What is it?" He was just at the end of his "secondly," and, deep in his discourse, did not like the interruption.

"It be a bit o' paper, I reck'n," said Martha, standing at the door, and carefully inspecting the card, as to the nature of which she supposed her master was questioning her. When she saw the black thumb-mark, she gave an expressive cluck, like a horrified hen who has overlaid an egg, and proceeded to adjust a corner of her apron over her finger and thumb in order to hold the card.

"Bring it here, then, Martha," said James, who had long learnt that it was better to let Martha "slide," as the Americans say, than to attempt corrections and explanations.

Martha delivered the card with, "And, sir, please, he do say his compliments, and

he'd be glad of five minutes' confusion."

"Philip Charlwood, Esq.!" said James, reading the name with astonishment, not unmingled with anger. "Tell him to go and be hanged!"

"'Es, sir," said Martha, the obedient and literal, preparing to convey the message without astonishment or scruple.

"Bless the girl, I believe if I told her to drown the baby she'd go and do it. Here! Martha! Stop!"

"'Es, sir," said the imperturbable, returning.

"Where is he?"

"He be minding Miss Prue, sir!"

"Good gracious!" ejaculated James, "how on earth did that come about?"

"I axed 'un," said the stolid one. "I could n't 'a' comed to bring thicksee for him if he had n't."

"Go at once and ask him into the drawing-room!"

"'Es, sure, sir."

"And, Martha!"

"'Es, sir."

"You need n't tell him to go and be hanged!"

"Oh! 'es, sure, sir!" said Martha, as if she would have conveyed the message unless her master had expressly withdrawn it.

Philip in the mean time had grown heartily tired of his charge. Miss Prue, with thorough feminine shrewdness, discovered that she had got a new attendant, and at once protested against such a change, with a view to seeing which would obtain the mastery. In vain Philip hushed and clucked, and dangled his watch-chain and charms, Prue shrieked steadily till she was red in the face.

"What the deuce would old Baron Bradley say if he saw me so employed?" thought Philip to himself as he chirped and clucked and nodded his head after the fashion in which, as he had observed, matrons usually attempt to pacify obstreperous infants.

"Tchuck, tchuck, tchuck! Diddy, diddy, diddy! M'pew!" said Philip, nodding all the while like the presiding genius (in the form of a mandarin) of a tea-warehouse.

"Ya-a-a! Boo-o! Eee-ee!" shrieked Prue the second, kicking convulsively, like one of those queer dancing card-board figures whose *levator* and *extensor* muscles are represented by bits of packthread.

At this moment Martha reappeared on the scene. At the sight of her baby immediately ceased crying, and began to chuckle and crow with that extraordinary infantile versatility which makes sandwiches of sadness and gladness of such true Vauxhall

consistency that you can't tell where the bread-and-butter ends and the ham begins, so intimately are they amalgamated.

"Come to its Martha, then, a pretty! Dancey, dancey, diddy! Upsy daisy, cluck! cluck! cluck!" said Martha, snatching up Prue, and utterly disregarding Philip until she had restored the child to complete sunshine.

Martha's imperturbability was only relaxed in favor of one person in the world, and that was baby, whom she adored with great vigor, and of whose lightest want and wish she was acutely sensible. When, therefore, Miss Prue was rendered once more happy and contented, Martha became conscious that there was such a being as Philip Charlwood, and that she had a message to give him.

"If you please, will you walk in—up to the ceiling, down to the ground!—into the drawin'-room—Jump, boh! there we go!—and master'll come to 'ee—Dancey, dancey, diddy, bounce!" said Martha, interpolating passages of nursery lore as she delivered her message.

"Will you be good enough to show me the way?" said Philip.

"'Ea, sure, if Miss Prue will go indoors, sir."

Accordingly, Martha piloted Philip up the path and into the passage. But here baby began to exhibit signs of displeasure at being brought into the house, so Martha hurriedly directed Philip to the drawing-room door, and turned back into the garden.

"Confoundedly awkward!" thought Philip. "Suppose there is some one there!"

But there was no help for it, so he put on a bold face and walked up to the drawing-room door and tapped.

"Come in!" said a female voice.

Philip entered. His sister and Prudence were engaged in arranging flowers in the glasses.

"La! if it is not Philip!" exclaimed Bella.

Prudence drew herself up. She thought Philip took a great liberty in walking in unannounced in this way.

That gentleman immediately detected the reason of her hauteur, and said,—

"Mrs. Harding must excuse this intrusion, which is not my fault. I was being shown into the room by the servant, at Mr. Harding's direction, when baby—what a charming child, Mrs. Harding!—protested against being brought in out of the garden, where I have had the honor to act as her nurse for some minutes."

Prue immediately attributed the whole

difficulty to the proper source,—Martha,—and became more gracious. What mother can find it in her heart to be stern with a man who speaks of baby as Philip spoke of little Prue?

"It is for me to apologize for the girl's stupidity and baby's misconduct."

"I can't hear a word against baby, Mrs. Harding. Fidelity to a lady whose servant I have had the honor of being—though I must own I was discharged very speedily—will not allow me to listen to anything of the sort."

"Whatever has brought you down here, Philip?" asked Bella, whose interest in baby was far too small to outweigh her curiosity as to the reason of her brother's visit.

"What brought me down here, eh? Why you, you silly girl, and that foolish old gentleman up at the Manor-house."

"You know, then—"

"Know everything. Of course I do! That old muff of a governor of yours—only he can't govern you—wrote to me at once, and I set off forthwith to bring all this nonsense to an end."

At this moment James Harding entered with an apology on his lips for keeping Philip waiting. But when he saw the young fellow evidently on such a pleasant footing already with his wife and Bella, he was too surprised to speak.

"O, dear Mr. Harding, this is my brother Philip," said the gushing Bella; "he has come to see us righted. Isn't he a dear good boy?"

"I am very glad to hear Mr. Charlwood has come to Bremning for so good a purpose. I only wish he had been here to hinder instead of healing this difference."

"O, I'll set it all right in a minute, Mr. Harding. As soon as you can spare this spirited young woman we shall be glad to have her back at the Manor-house, where her father is anxiously waiting to take her again into his arms."

"But, Philip, I will not consent to give up—"

"You won't be asked to give up anything or anybody, my child, so say no more about it. I am sorry, Mr. Harding, I had not the pleasure of meeting your brother. Have you heard from him since his departure?"

"No, not yet. At least we have not, though some one else may," said James, looking at Bella.

"What, me?" said that young lady. "O dear no; not a line, the bad boy!"

"Ah! he was always a bad correspondent. His great friend, Martindale, once told me that he had never received more than two notes from him in his life."

"A bad correspondent," said Philip, internally. "All the better! We shall have less difficulty in choking him off."

"Bella, dear," said Prue, going up to her young friend and kissing her, "I shall be very sorry to lose you, but I am so glad you and your father will be friends again. It is so shocking to have dissensions in families."

"It is, indeed," says Philip, with an air of great earnestness. "And now let me explain what has happened, which it is due to you, Mr. and Mrs. Harding, that I should do. On hearing from my father what had occurred, I at once saw he had been very much mistaken, and I came straight off to him and told him so. It is impossible to rale the affections, and it is wrong to interfere with the attachments of young people; at least, that is my opinion, and I did not scruple to tell the governor so. After some argument the old gentleman, whose only vice is that he is a little hasty and obstinate, gave way, and asked me to become the peacemaker between him and Bella. I am to tell that giddy girl from him that he regrets the angry words and cruel speeches he made to her, and entreats her to return home. She shall be received back and restored to the same place in his affection as before. He will not attempt to dictate to her as to the disposal of her heart, and will not in any way interfere with her engagement. Will that suit you, Bella?"

"You're the best of brothers, Philip. I know all this is the work of your kind heart," said Bella. But, between you and me, I believe in her heart of hearts she was not very grateful for having the gilt of romance rubbed off the gingerbread of existence.

"To you, Mr. Harding, I am to convey an apology for his having forgotten himself in an interview with you, and used language which he should not have used before a clergyman. I trust you will not refuse to accept the *amende*."

"Certainly not. I am only too happy to think that Mr. Charwood did not really feel and mean what he expressed."

"O no, not he! But you know he's a very queer card, as proud as Lucifer, and he does n't like coming down like this and eating his own words. You must n't, between ourselves, expect him to be very warm or gracious just yet. He won't get over the humiliation for some time, and if you take my advice you will avoid all reference to the disagreement when you meet."

"I should never think of raking up old grievances."

"I thought not. I was sure of it from

the way in which my father spoke of you at the time when you got this place. You know him, I'm sure, by this time, so I can talk unreservedly to you. He's a queer lot, and very obstinate, so you must expect him to fight shy of you for a long time. But he'll come round when he thinks all this is quite forgotten. What a bore pride of this sort is, is n't it? Thank goodness, I have none of it!"

"It is a fruitful cause of unhappiness."

"By the way, you will excuse the question, but is there any pecuniary hitch between you?"

"There is. Your father —"

"No! Don't tell me the particulars, please! I have no wish to intrude on that topic, but I guessed there was something of the sort from an allusion he made. I would recommend you to say nothing about it, — leave it alone, and I don't doubt that it will be righted. Of course, I would n't presume to dictate, but I am so anxious that all should be settled on a comfortable basis again between you. Squire and clergyman ought to pull together, or woe betide the poor parish!"

"You are quite right."

"I believe so, and therefore take the liberty of addressing you as to what, knowing the old boy as I do, will bring about a proper understanding. If you try to set him right, he is sure to go wrong."

"I will avoid the subject, though I should greatly like to point out where I think the injustice lies."

"Don't, for goodness' sake! You'll gain your point better by silence. It's always easier to lead than to drive, — ask anybody who ever had a pig to take to market!"

In this way the shrewd Philip led the conversation on, and made himself most agreeable. He artfully elicited all James's particular hobbies, and what views he took on disputed Church matters, and contrived to make it appear that his own opinions were exactly the same. He took great pains to make himself pleasant to Prue, and therefore insisted on having Prue the second brought in. After some little difficulty that young female was prevailed upon to sit on his knee, and play with his gold watch, which she of course instantly conveyed to the infant's usual repository, her mouth; but Philip, though he was very particular about his watch, punctuality being one of his prides, did not, by word or change of countenance, express the least alarm when this rapid act of voracity was performed.

In the interim Bella was up stairs packing her boxes, and preparing to return to the Manor-house. Martha Ogleby, released from the responsibility of baby, was told off as an assistant, and aided Bella to arrange her dresses in her trunks.

Even the variety and splendor of Bella's wardrobe did not rouse Martha from her calm. She only looked twice at the collars and cuffs, and wondered if the washerwoman who got them up used French stiffening as her mother did. With the sole exception of baby and her wants, Martha had not a thought beyond that washing-tub in the gentle steam of which she had passed her childhood, — a fact which may explain the sodden state of her faculties.

By and by Bella's boxes were ready, and Thomas wheeled them off in triumph to the Manor-house on a barrow. Philip and Bella bade good by to the good parson and his wife. Bella was overflowing with protestations of gratitude; Philip was exceedingly civil, promising to drop in again soon, and saying how much indebted he was to them for their kindness to Bella, and for the position they had taken with reference to the recent unhappy family quarrel. He prevailed upon Miss Prue, by dint of putting his signet-ring on her thumb and allowing her a parting suck at his watch, to give him a kiss when he went away.

This was done with the view of propitiating Prue the elder, and not from any taste for babies' kisses, which, it must be owned, are apt to be erratic and moist. As soon as he was out of sight, beyond that parsonage gate, Philip took out his handkerchief and rubbed the bridge of his nose, where a slight dampness marked the place where baby had kissed him, and when he got to the Manor-house he went up to his room and washed his face scrupulously.

Well! if he had such a horror of infantile caresses, and only submitted to them with the view of propitiating Prue, he might have spared himself the trouble.

"What an agreeable fellow! — and so clever! I wish he was here oftener," said James as he retired to his sermon once more.

Prue was silent.

"Don't you like him, Prue?" said her husband, interpreting the silence.

"No, I don't, James. He's deceitful, — a — what is the word?"

"Humbug, my dear?"

"Well, I meant hypocrite, but perhaps your word, though not quite so ladylike, describes him better. He's a great humbug, then, James, — there!"

CHAPTER XXII.

PLOTS AND PLANS.

THE squire did not receive Bella with so good a grace as her brother had led her to expect, but Philip managed to pacify and keep her quiet. His was no easy task. He was much in the same position as a fireman who, hose in hand, stands in a house that has been burned down, and in which the fire is not yet quite extinguished. He has to keep playing on the scorched ruins to prevent the flame from breaking out again, and as long as there is a tongue of fire to be seen darting up he has to prevent the adjacent houses from catching fire; and all this time, at any moment, the whole tottering edifice may crash down upon him at once.

Philip Charlwood stuck to his post bravely, and more than once extinguished what might have been the commencement of a new conflagration; but it was rather nervous work, and he did not like it. As the danger of a fresh outbreak was chiefly due to his father's overbearing temper, he determined to give him a serious talking to.

Accordingly, after dinner, Philip, having opened the door for his sister to leave, returned to the table, and, filling himself a glass of port, proceeded to lecture his father.

"I'll tell you what it is, governor. If you don't take more care, and swallow your anger with less perceptible gulps, all my labor will be thrown away."

"What do you mean, sir? I won't be —"

"Come, come! I never quarrel, — nothing's worth it. I would n't put myself to such an inconvenience as to get into a rage on any account. So don't make a row, because, if you do, off I go to town, and then you will be just where I found you."

"I won't have her confounded airs!"

"You sha' n't have 'em any longer than I can help, but you really must give her her head now, — you must indeed."

"To let her bolt to the deuce?"

"Not a bit of it. When a horse bolts, don't try to pull up by sheer strength, because he's stronger than you. Urge him on with whip and spur, and he'll pretty quick tire, or stop from mere obstinacy!"

"Humph! Well, I'll try."

"You must, — you'll ruin my plan if you don't, and then good by to the Countess of Mountgarret. Don't you know that girl's disposition yet? She would never have made this engagement if it had not been out of opposition, and she will drop it now as soon as she finds you don't mind about it. She's as full of romantic, sentimental trash as this glass is of port. Check, and she'll bolt; urge her, and she'll stop."

"You ought to be a father of a family, Philip, you're so wise about the training of young people."

"You may laugh, sir, but I'll back myself against any one. I've had no practice, but my theory is one that can't be beaten. I know it's right, for it has been tried to some sort of extent."

"Indeed, and where?"

"In a travelling caravan of wild beasts."

"What do you mean?"

"That I got the hint of it from a man called 'Signor Smizzi, the Monarch of the Leonine Kingdom.' His real name was Smith. The caravan was exhibiting in a town where I was staying on circuit. Somehow or other I picked this fellow up, found him very amusing and intelligent, and took some notice of him. What I admired in him was his patience. I'm pretty good that way myself; you could not put me out of temper, for instance, because, if I felt there was any chance of your doing so, I should go away, or go to sleep; but he would have borne it, he had perseverance as well as patience, in short. One day he was eight hours at a stretch in the den trying to teach one of the lions a trick."

"Did he succeed?"

"To be sure he did! The animal at last discovered what was required of it, and did it."

"He must have been very tired."

"He was nearly fainting with fatigue and hunger, but he told me that if he had given up then there would have been all the ground to go over afresh the next day. This led to a conversation on his mode of training, and he explained the system to me, — 'I always reward them and am kind to them when they do what they are told, and I am as patient as possible with them. I treat them all alike, not making favorites or showing any great kindness to them except as a reward. I never threaten, and I seldom strike, and when I do strike I only strike once.'"

"What did he strike them with?"

"A little truncheon made of steel, and heavily loaded at the top, — a sort of model of a policeman's staff. He always carried it in his coat-pocket. He told me he could stun any of the beasts at one blow with it, and that in one instance he had killed one. It was astonishing to see how the great brutes obeyed him. I have seen several lion-tamers, but I never saw one to whom the beasts were so entirely obedient. They did not crouch about as if they were afraid of the whip, nor did they snarl and growl at him behind his back, as is usually the case. They watched him attentively,

as if anxious not to miss a look or sign, and did everything with an air of willingness."

"And you propose to treat children like this?"

"Similarly. I should not, of course, take a steel truncheon to them, or knock them down, but I should manage them by precisely analogous means."

"You had better open a school."

"Not I. I hate children!"

"And yet you are trying to establish a system of training for their advantage."

"It is incidentally to their advantage, but my more immediate object is the abating of the nuisance that children are."

"Humph! that's one way of looking at it!"

"You should see my clerk. By Jove! he's a model. You might set a clock at him for punctuality. As for obedience, if I told him to go and commit a murder, he'd do it; and as for saying what he has to say in the least number of words possible, why, he'd beat the best *precis*-writer under government."

"I wish to goodness you could make Bella so obedient!"

"That is for you to do."

"O yes, of course. But how?"

"Just as I have told you. Don't bluster or threaten. Take things quietly, and wait. Be patient, and try to beat her by that; and if you don't, and the worst comes to the worst, all you can do is —"

"Knock her down with a steel truncheon."

"No, cut her off with a silver shilling, and think no more about her. But it won't come to that, — I know it won't. As soon as your opposition is withdrawn she'll cease to care for this fellow. Absence will settle the question, and then in steps Lysaght, and wins."

"I hope to Heaven he may!"

"I'm determined he shall!"

"Well, that's something towards it, with your power of will, Philip. I declare, you frighten me. I would not have believed any one could induce me to take this girl back and consent to her folly, but here you have persuaded me into it in five minutes!"

Philip smiled, and filled his glass.

"Your will can do anything if you only keep it in proper condition by training. Have you ever seen anything of mesmerism? No? Well, you have heard of it, and I have seen something of it, and I believe it is all nothing more or less than an effort of will. I know a fellow who could mesmerize that stopper so that it

ould roll across the table to him when he fled it."

"Nonsense!"

"Not a bit of it! I've seen it, and, that's more, I believe I could do it myself."

"Have you ever tried?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because, if by any chance I failed, I should be like Signor Smizzi with the lion. I should have to go on for eight hours or more trying to throw sufficient energy into my will to accomplish it, and that would be waste of time as well as a wearisome job; beside, such violent volition would play the deuce with your brain."

"You're an oddity."

"I know it, but I find it answers. Eccentricity passes for genius. But had we not better join Bella? That reminds me, by the way, to beg you once more to treat her with an appearance, at all events, of your old kindness. You will smash the whole scheme if you don't. Be as jolly and indulgent to her as you used to be. Will you?"

"I'll see if I can."

"That's right! Now we'll go to her."

"Won't you have another glass of port?"

"No, thanks. After your sixth glass you lose all the delicate appreciation of flavor, and might go on drinking an inferior wine without detecting it. Therefore, after the sixth glass it is as well to stop, for all beyond that is waste of stomach without gain of flavor. It's no use going on when the real enjoyment is past. Ah, if people only knew when to stop, what a world it would be! I believe the original curse inflicted for tasting the tree of knowledge was nothing more or less than this ignorance of the limits, 'Quos ultra citraque nequit consistere rectum,' as old Horace says. But I suppose you have forgotten your classics?"

So saying, the young philosopher rose from the table.

What Philip said about eccentricity was the only genuine sentiment he had expressed. It was the key-note of his character, the practice to which he owed his reputation as a conversationalist and man of intellect. He was really no more than a shrewd, cold-headed logician, — a man with an eminently judicial mind, but by no means a brilliant one intellectually. But he had discovered that a tinge of peculiarity in opinion or manner often passes for something higher, and he profited by his discovery.

He studied — just as he did for his speeches at court — all sorts of abstruse and quaint theories. He was a mighty reader and an excellent digester, and his bookseller had orders to send him any publications of a crotchety or mad description that appeared. Hence he was stocked with odds and ends of eccentricity, which passed for original and obtained him credit for genius. He got up with great care all kinds of "sensational" opinions, and they stood him in good stead.

There are always two sides to a question, and when a clever talker like Philip takes the wrong even, he can find something to say for it, while his opponent, though ever so right, will find it difficult to argue with him. And then what is the result? That opponent, conscious of having supported the right side, and of course supposing that he did so very ably, yet cannot but feel that Philip has the best of him, and has made out a strong case for his side. So he says, "Clever fellow, that Charwood, — a little peculiar in his views, but uncommonly clever, — splendid intellect, — quite a genius!" Thus easily are reputations made.

Philip and his father joined Bella in the drawing-room. The squire contrived for a few minutes to make himself quite pleasant to his daughter, but soon, exhausted with the effort, he retired to an easy-chair, where he was ere long dozing comfortably.

Bella was quite delighted at the change. To tell the truth, she had already become a little sickened of her romance. It was all very well to talk about love in a cottage and suffering poverty with the man of her choice; but when she had, during her stay at the parsonage, to dress herself without the assistance of a lady's-maid, and in other respects to attend on herself instead of being dependent on others, she did not like it much, and was heartily glad to go back to the Manor-house.

Philip seated himself at the tea-table beside Bella, and began talking about all sorts of topics, rattling on in a pleasant, cheerful sort of way until he gradually brought the conversation round to herself.

"Well, Bell, you know me too well not to feel sure that what I say and do is for your good, my child, and I have fought your battle with the old boy; but it does grieve me, though I have n't breathed a word about it to any one else, to think you have made your choice."

"Love, dear Philip, cannot be controlled."

"Quite true, my dear, and that is one reason of my trouble. Suppose you have made a mistake, and only wake up to find

yourself the wife of a poor subaltern in a marching regiment, without the love that alone can support you?"

"O, never!"

"I hope not. But there's some one else who is broken-hearted at this, or will be when he hears of it."

"What do you mean, Philip? You're such a mysterious creature at times. Pray tell me who this wonderful person is?"

"You must not mention it again, or let him see you know it. Do you promise?"

"O yes, of course."

"It is my old and dear friend, Marcus Lysaght. He and I have been sworn friends from almost childhood. Many years ago, anxious to strengthen the tie between us and become really brothers, we vowed to marry each other's sisters. The vow was very solemnly made, and we have always spoken and thought of its accomplishment as if it were certain."

"Dear me, how romantic!" said Bella, immensely interested. "It is so like Juan and Prosper in the *Brothers of Bohemia*. But has n't Mr. Lysaght got a sister?"

Philip paused. He had not been quite prepared for this. But there was no time to lose in thinking. He gave a sigh and said, —

"You must not ask about her."

"What! is there some mystery, some secret, about her?"

"My darling Bella, the secret is not mine. And when Marcus comes I beg you will make no allusion to his sisters."

"Is he coming, then?"

"Yes, before I heard of all this unhappy business I had invited him down here to see you. It is too late now, but I could not write and put off the visit. I must break it to him as gently as possible. He will be here to-morrow."

"Dear me, how romantic!" thought Bella; "how delightful it will be!"

"She preciously nearly caught me then," thought Philip. "I must drive over and meet Marcus at Scalperton and prime him as to this affair. It will be ticklish work, but, by Jove! I must bring about the match somehow."

"I'm very curious to see Mr. Lysaght, Philip."

"He's a charming fellow, Bella. It is not every young barrister who is lucky enough to be the bosom friend and tried companion of an earl."

"An earl!"

"Yes, child, he is an earl. His father is Earl of Mountgarret, and his health is so bad that Marcus may come to the title at any hour."

"La! fancy having a real earl down here to stay with us. Would n't the Parmenters and the Stowell people be savage if they knew it? How long will he stay?"

"I really don't know, Bella. When I asked him I was in hopes that he would stay a long time, in order to win your heart. But now I can hardly expect or ask him to stay long. I fear he may return at once when he hears—"

"But why should he, Philip? You know — you see — I mean of course that you are so fond of him, and would so like to have him here, you need not say anything to him about my engagement."

"That would hardly be fair to him, child, much as I should like to keep him here. And it would be awkward for you. What could you do if his attentions became marked?"

"O, they won't, and if they do I can give him a hint. I know how it can be done discreetly, as Julia does it in *Belinda Blount*, or *Cupid's Chase*. Have you ever read it?"

"No! I never have time for novels. Marcus is the boy for them. He reads every one that comes out, I believe, and has a tremendous stock of them."

"La! how nice! I wonder if he would lend me some."

"He'd give you the whole lot in a moment, if you asked him."

"What an agreeable man! Is he nice-looking?"

"I can't undertake to say. But he is the idol of society, invited everywhere, and quite an authority in the fashionable world."

"O, then he must be handsome! I know from what I have read that such favorites of society are always very handsome. There was Sir Wilfred de Waveney and — dear me, who is it, in *Fashion and Folly*? — and the Duke of Deepdene. They were all handsome."

"Well, most people think Marcus good-looking, I know. Poor fellow!" and Philip heaved a deep sigh.

In this manner Philip contrived to interest his sister in his friend. He knew the romantic side of her character, and was aware of her weaknesses. And he made such use of this knowledge that he filled her head with all sorts of romantic notions about Marcus, so much so that Bella began half to regret that she was engaged to Edward Harding, more especially as her father had withdrawn his disapproval.

It was agreed that Bella's engagement should be kept a secret from Marcus. Philip felt that this was greatly in his favor, and

fully determined to tell his friend, and let him as a favor to pay all attention to his sister,—to flirt with her, in short, in order to wean her from her folly. He was quite sure Marcus would have no objection, and he felt he might leave the rest to work itself out.

"If the worst comes to the worst, I can only tell him in the end that he has carried rather too far, and the only reparation that he can make for trifling with her feelings will be to marry her."

And Philip chuckled to think how he was playing the puppets for his own ends.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE MARCH ON LUCKNOW.

WHEN the gallant 203d Berkshire Rifles landed in India they had their work cut out for them. They were not accustomed to a tropical climate, and the novelty of their duties was very unpleasant. They growled at the notion of encamping and inactivity in the day and vigorous marches in the night. But though they growled they felt there was no choice, for at midday the sun seemed to turn the atmosphere into molten metal. If a man ventured beyond the shade, which was quite hot enough, it was like plunging into a boiling spring. So they sat in the shade, trying to doze, but inwardly fretting because they seemed to be wasting precious time, instead of pressing onward to the rescue of their imperilled countrymen and countrywomen.

"Why don't you smoke?" said a gray-headed old major to Edward, who was tossing about on his rug in the tent.

"I can't; because if I smoke I think," said Ted, "and then I get fancying that just at the moment when I am idly puffing out a whiff of smoke some fiendish Pandey is cutting down some brave chap or other, or murdering some helpless woman or child. I can't smoke!"

"My boy, it's no use fretting. I know the climate, and we do our friends most service by not pressing on too rashly. Remember, we have more than one thing to think of. If we went madly forward we should at last stumble towards the enemy, too weak and worn to do more than add to the number of victims, and what is most necessary and best for the safety of all is that the prestige of our fellows should not be injured. Every handful that gets a repulse because it has been pressed on to the scene of action too quickly adds three times

its own number to the enemy in the encouragement it gives."

"True, very true!" groaned Ted, but he could not feel a bit more at ease. Truth is not always comforting, because hope and fear are stronger.

So the fierce sun blazed across the sky, like the cruel torch of war, and sank in blood-red clouds in the west. And after the brief twilight the 203d pushed forward again. What weary marches they were, through tangled jungles and swamps, canopied by darkness, or lit by the uncertain rays of a moon that had to struggle with heavy mists! At times a frightened tiger would bound away before the head of the column, or a huge snake would writhe across the path; or there was a stampede of buffaloes, or even the crash of a terrified troop of wild elephants.

At times some native was taken red-handed, and shot down like a wild beast; or some escaping white was picked up or brought in by Hindoos, who were still faithful to their ancient masters, and who were rewarded for their fidelity.

The regiment was on the march to join the reinforcements intended for the second relief of Lucknow, and, in spite of the seeming delay, inevitable on account of the day halts, was pressing forward rapidly. Indeed, the fatigue was so great, and the distances traversed so long, that the soldiers would have become disorganized, and might even have mutinied under any other circumstances than those which dictated such despatch. They knew they were going to succor their brothers and sisters from the leaguering fiends, and each man struggled on without a murmur. If any soldier ever felt his pluck failing or his determination relaxing, he said to himself, "Cawnpore!" and that was like a mighty cordial.

If the mutineers stop to cross bayonets with these dogged, fierce men, there will be small quarter given. All the devil of the English soldier's disposition is up in arms, and ferocity will requite ferocity sternly and mercilessly.

In this spirit they keep on sturdily over long stretches of arid plain and thick jungle and morass, until they strike upon a stream, along the banks of which they push forward. This stream is but a slender thread of water now, but the ravine, or nullah, through which it flows shows that in winter it is a fierce and mighty torrent, filling the gully to its top. The sides are steep, and clothed with rank vegetation that springs up in summer, to be torn up and washed away in the storms of winter. It is a wide ravine in parts, in others so narrow you

might converse easily with any one on the opposite crest.

As the 203d is preparing to halt in the dawn of morning on the left bank of this nullah, at a point where it slopes more than usual, so as to afford easy access to the water, a body of cavalry is seen coming along the farther bank. There is no doubt about what they are, — only English horse could come at such a pace in such order. The Pandies would be careering along like a flight of pigeons, not massed together like a cloud.

When they come nearer, Edward Harding, who is watching them, recognizes the well-known uniform of the 8th Dragoon Guards. It is the last regiment in the service that retains the bit of tiger-skin on the helmet. Imagine Ted's delight at the prospect of meeting Tom Martindale! He jumps up, picks up his revolver by instinct, — it is n't safe to venture far alone unless you are well armed, — and proceeds to descend the side of the nullah. Though not precipitous, it is still so steep that he descends at a slope sideways in the direction of the advancing horse.

Without a thought of danger Ted strides along, now swinging down a declivity, now leaping across a chasm. All at once, in jumping from a higher ledge to a lower, he springs almost into the arms of a Hindoo in tattered European uniform, evidently a revolted sepoy. This fellow has been following the regiment for days to cut off stragglers, with the crafty, patient cruelty of one of the tigers of his country. Just now, as he was stealing along the bed of the stream, chuckling inwardly to think that some of the unbelievers would be sure to come down to the water alone and so fall into his hands, he heard the jingle of accoutrements and the dull beat of many hoofs on the dry, reverberating ground. So he crawled a little way up the bank and listened, and is listening so intently that he does n't notice Ted's coming until he is almost upon him.

The place on which the two meet and grapple is a little platform of rock not at all adapted for a struggle. Ted, besides, is at a disadvantage, for the impetus of his leap carries him forward, while his foe, leaping nimbly on one side, closes on him and pushes him towards the edge, whence there is an ugly drop, — ugly not so much on account of its height as because there are nasty jagged rocks and stumps of uprooted trees below.

The Pandey has his back to the bank; Ted is unable to hold his ground, so he loosens his grip of his enemy, draws his re-

volver, and fires at him, but the other strikes up his arm, and, taking advantage of Ted's having loosed a hold that might have dragged him over too, thrusts him over the ledge with the butt of his gun. Luckily for Ted the quarters are so close, or he might be bayoneted. As it is, he falls headlong from the ledge, a long train of thought flashes through his brain like a spark of electricity, and then there is a dull crash and a gleam of a thousand stars, and he is lying all of a heap among the boughs of a fallen tamarisk.

But the discharge of Ted's pistol has attracted the notice of some of the men who were on the top of the bank. With a shout like the cry of dogs let loose at a wild beast they come bounding down the side. Master Pandey, who is just about to descend and finish his prostrate foe, looks round and thinks better of it. He steals off rapidly among the scrub, but the men are too quick for him, — they track him by the stir of the bushes. An officer on the bank above, who is a keen sportsman, cheers them on as if they were a pack of terriers after an otter, for like an otter Pandey is making for the stream. He reaches it, but at the shallows; there is no pool wherein he can dive, and before he has time to think again they are on him. He turns, makes one wild lunge with his bayonet, and then six glittering blades are plunged savagely into him all at once, and down he goes half in the water, half on the land, and there dies, writhing in the mire, while the men stand over him grinding their teeth, and shaking their fists at him, but, now that he is down, not touching him again.

In the mean time, half a dozen others have scrambled down to Ted, and have extricated him from his uncomfortable position. He is stunned a little, and shaken, and has cut his head on a stone, but there are no bones broken. So, as soon as he has found his revolver and reloaded, he sets out to scramble over the stream and climb the other bank. The Dragoon Guards came up in time to see the hunt of the skulking sepoy, and have halted, and the officers welcomed Ted, who, without any farther adventures, arrives at the top a little out of breath.

"Hullo! much hurt?" asks a young captain, who has drawn up near the brow of the slope.

"O no! not at all," says Ted, though the blood has flowed freely from his hurt.

"Is it a sword-cut?"

"No, — the beggar tumbled me over, and I fell on a sharp stone."

"Well, he won't push you again, I fancy,

"or I saw six of your chaps make a pretty lecent sieve of him."

"I'm glad to hear it. But can you tell me, is Martindale with you?"

"No, he is n't, — stop, though, — you're Harding of the Berkshire, I suppose?"

"Yes, I am!"

"I thought so by your asking for him. I have often heard him speak of you. He has sold out of ours and gone into the Line."

"You don't know what regiment, I suppose?"

"No, I don't, for it was n't decided, — he even talked of a native regiment, but that was only gammon."

"But how was it he left the 8th?"

"It's a long story, but as you won't mind hearing it, being his friend, I'll tell you. We're going to halt here, I see, so we'll go and smoke a weed under that group of palms if you like."

"By all means. I'm most anxious to hear about Tom."

"So you shall, but if you'll take my advice, you'll let Barker, our surgeon, wash and strap that cut first."

"O, it's nothing."

"Yes, but even nothing, in this climate, is not a wise thing to leave unprotected. The sun and the flies would play the deuce with that cut in an hour."

Ted submitted with tolerable grace to his first bit of army surgery, and then joined his new friend in the shade of the trees. Some horse-cloths and skins were heaped together for lounges, and an awning was suspended between the trunks of four of the palms, making an airy and cool shelter from the heat, which was already beginning to make itself felt.

"Glad to see you properly patched up," said the captain, producing a brandy-flask. "Here, some of you chaps, go down and fetch some water; and hi! look here; just take it from the stream above where that Pandey is lying, for I have no desire to drink my foeman's blood, — nor have you, I suppose, Harding?"

"Anything but that!"

"Well, sit down there, — and here's a weed. Help yourself to brandy; they won't be long with the water."

When they were at last comfortably settled down with their brandy-pawnee and cheroots, Edward reminded the captain of his promise to tell him about Tom Martindale.

"Poor Tom!" said the Captain. "To be sure I'll tell you. He married against his governor's wishes. Now the old gentleman was n't a bad sort of fellow, only he

was dreadfully fond of appearing like a swell of good family. He was n't, you know; but he thought his position as under-secretary was sufficient to warrant the assumption, and he had made up his mind to marry Tom to some girl of good family, — and he might have done it, too, for there are lots of 'em in the market, and an under-sec. at the Ordnance Office — in spite of the shindies and scrapes it has got into — is in a good position to bid. Well, Tom did n't see things in the same light, and — as I suppose you know — married a poor girl, a governess, I believe."

"Yes! I knew her and was present at her marriage. In fact, my own brother married them. But his father knew of it, though he did n't approve."

"Quite so. But he behaved very stupidly afterwards. He had better have forbidden it at first when the evil was reparable, — it was no use kicking against destiny when it was too late to alter matters. When Tom and his wife went up to town, the old boy tried a very silly game. He would always be too delighted to see his son, he said, but he did not wish to form the acquaintance of his wife."

"By Jove! Tom would n't stand that, I fancy."

"He did n't. He told the governor that he must decline to have anything to do with those who would not recognize Mrs. Martindale, and then — for the first time in their lives, I believe — the father and son quarrelled and parted."

"I'm really grieved to hear it. The affection on both sides was so very warm. They were more like brothers than father and son. It will be a great sorrow to Tom."

"It will be greater to his father, who will be in perpetual anxiety about Tom, — fearful of hearing every mail of some calamity."

"Is he in India, then?"

"O yes, I believe so. He declined to accept any further aid from his father, and sold his commission in ours, which is rather an expensive regiment. But as we were daily expecting orders to sail for India, Tom fancied the reason of his retirement might be misunderstood, and he told me that he was determined to join some regiment that was under orders for the scene of the mutiny. I have n't heard anything of him since, but you know Tom well enough to be sure he kept his determination."

"Poor Tom! of course he would. But his wife, — was she to go with him, I wonder?"

"O, I think so. He did n't speak of her as if he were going to leave her behind."

"I'm afraid she was hardly strong enough to go campaigning with him. Well! Old Martindale was very kind indeed to me, but, hang it all, I could punch his stupid old head. What the deuce did he mean by behaving in such a childish way?"

"There's some excuse for him, — not to mention that he most likely suffers acutely for it. You see he was not quite received on an equal footing by the swells, and he was anxious that his son should enter society on better terms: it was, in fact, that fruitful cause of half the miseries in this world, the honor of the family."

"Yes; but he should have been above it."

"Nobody is. Here am I sent over here to swelter in a heavy dragoon's togs in a bearskin saddle because I fell in love with my tutor's niece. There was nothing serious about it, — it would have worn itself out in a week after I went up to Oxford. But my good mother was in such alarm about it that she actually got my uncle, who is colonel of the regiment, to procure me a commission in it because it was going abroad."

"I dare say she is rather unhappy about what she has done now."

"Rather! I believe you. Why, as soon as she learnt our destination, she wrote me such a letter! I verily think I might have married all my tutor's nieces at once, and she would n't have murmured. But you're not smoking, — take another cheroot."

"No, thanks; not just yet. But I'll help myself to a little more cold pale, if you'll allow me."

In this way Ted and the captain chatted and lounged away the morning. At last Ted began to subside a little.

"You're tired," said the captain. "That crack on the head has weakened you a bit."

"I do feel drowsy, and, I dare say, from the loss of blood and the shake."

"Lean back on the rugs, then, and take a siesta. I'll wake you when the bugle blows."

In about a quarter of an hour Edward was fast asleep. He dreamt he was going down the nullah again, and that a sepoy jumped up before him, that he had a struggle with him and shot him; but that when he threw him into the stream he turned into Tom Martindale, who said he had turned sepoy because his father would n't let him marry.

So Ted rested and slumbered all that afternoon, for he had been knocked up with forced marches, and his fall and the blow on his head had weakened him.

As the shades of evening were beginning

to gather rapidly, his friend shook him. Ted jumped up at once, and felt for his revolver.

"Don't shoot, — I'll come down," said the other, laughing. "It's the first bugle, and your chaps are on the move."

So Ted, by this time thoroughly awake, shook hands with his friend and wished him good by. And then he crossed the nullah again, and rejoined the 203d Berkshires Rifles.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A LOYAL NATIVE REGIMENT.

THE 120th Regiment of Bombay Native Infantry is quartered at Ungawallah, and all confidence is reposed in it, for about three weeks ago some emissaries who came from the mutineers at Chillabagh, with the intention of inciting the men to revolt, were seized by them and delivered up to the authorities. Still, it is felt that it would be a poor reward for this fidelity to call on them to go and act in the field against their misguided fellow-countrymen. So there is tranquillity at Ungawallah, except that the British officers there would like to be up and doing, for fresh tales of butchery, treachery, and brutality are coming in every day.

There is quite a little colony of ladies here; for as soon as it was discovered that the 120th could be trusted, officers in stations close by sent their wives to Ungawallah, they themselves remaining among the men who might be let loose at any moment upon them.

But though there was tranquillity at Ungawallah, it was only skin-deep; for in spite of the strong marks of loyalty which the 120th had displayed, there were a few men among the officers — men who had been long among the natives — who did not scruple to express their fears about the real sentiments of the regiment. But they met with a fierce opponent in the colonel, an old and experienced officer.

"By gad, sir!" said the colonel to these objectors and doubters, singly and severally, — "by gad, sir! you don't deserve to hold a commission in the regiment, by gad!" They come out of it like silver, — silver three times thingumbob'd, — ask Mr. Collympton, the chaplain, what it is. By gad, sir! I'm proud of 'em, — proud of 'em. Why, I've been with 'em for years, and know every chap in the regiment, and by gad, sir! they're as true as steel!"

The colonel spoke no more than was true, — he had commanded the regiment for years, and knew his men by name. He was

very popular, too, though he sprinkled his conversation plentifully with an expression which I, taking a leaf out of the book of algebraists, represent by the term, "By gad, sir!"

The colonel reported so favorably of his men, and the men behaved so well, — not a single spy ventured to approach the station, and even the bazaar scamps hooted the men as they passed them, — that two recommendations he represented very strongly were attended to.

In the centre of Ungawallah there was a very strong fort, — a native fort, erected on a rocky knoll that towered above the town, from which it was approached by a winding path commanded by the guns of the fort. A river ran under the fort in the rear, but the rocks were so precipitous that an ascent that way had never been attempted, though stores could be slung up by a crane.

The colonel's first proposal was that his regiment, as a reward for its fidelity, should not be sent into the field. Such of the officers as could be spared might act with other regiments, but the 120th should hold Ungawallah on the defensive, and that all the powder in the magazines at suspected stations should be secretly withdrawn and sent to the fortress, — a sufficient supply being left for the Europeans at such places.

These recommendations, I have said, were attended to. From Chillabagh and Maharabad large supplies of powder were despatched by night in bullock-carts. A European rode by the side of each native driver with a revolver ready cocked to blow out his brains if he gave the alarm. Another station, Kolaghur, a little farther up the river, despatched a large quantity of ammunition and some light guns by water.

The Kolaghur stores arrived first, and were hauled up into the fort by the Europeans, — it having been determined, at the suggestion of the suspicious, and against the wishes of the colonel, that no natives should be permitted to enter the fort.

The Kolaghur stores, however, were barely got in and the boats were hardly round the turn of the river, ere the powder-carts from Chillabagh and Maharabad hove in sight. The Europeans in the fort had barely bidden adieu to the brave fellows who were going back in those boats to almost a certainty of massacre, when the bullock-cart escort rode in, weary and hungry, and sick at heart with watching and anxiety.

The carts are received into the lines, and the new-comers sit down for the first time for many weeks to an undisturbed and comfortable meal. The colonel was in great

feather, and "by gad"-ed without ceasing, and the dinner passed off splendidly.

One of the "bullock-cart escort," as the officers of the 120th styled the new-comers, is a Civil servant, Mr. Thomas Friston. He happens to sit opposite to an officer of the native regiment. He looks at him for a long time, and, at last, bending over him with a quiet chuckle, says, —

"Whereupon 'Time in the bows there! Keep your eyes on Two's back and go well forward over your toes,' said Mr. William Kingston, of Denb. Coll."

"By Jove! what? — why, yes, of course, Tom Friston!" says the other.

"I thought I knew you, Martindale," says Friston, and then they shake hands.

And I need hardly tell you that when two old college chums meet they have plenty to say, so the two Toms fall into deep conversation and go over old times again. Tom Martindale learns for the first time that a very naughty practical joke which he and Ted played, when they felt a disinclination one night for chapel, the next morning had been a success. They had most irreligiously filled the keyhole of the outer door with bread-crumbs, and (though they took that trouble in order to avoid the trouble of getting up to chapel) were up with the earliest to see the success of their plan, and were surprised to find the door open.

Friston had been up later than Tom, and had learned from the porter that, but for his having discovered the mischief in time to send for a locksmith, Denbigh would for once have had to dispense with that very reverent morning service which was dashed off in about a quarter of an hour.

"By Jove! won't I tell Ted when I see him!" said Tom; whereupon Friston inquired about Ted. In this way the conversation went on, the circles from it widening (like the rings on the surface of a pond where a stone has been flung) until they reached the shore of the remote past.

Tom and Friston were walking outside the mess-tent now, smoking their cigars. All at once a slender, snake-like flame leaped into the air from a bungalow near the lines. It flickered a second, and then died out.

"Hullo," said Tom Martindale, "there's a fire!"

"A fire!" said the other; "then Heaven help us, for it's all over!"

"What do you mean?" asked Tom.

But as he spoke the whole line of bungalows — the officers' quarters — burst into flame. There came a shout, too, — a shout of triumph.

"They've mutinied!" said Friston.

"Mutinied be hanged!" said a voice close by. "Be gad, air, it's the bazaar thieves."

"I fear not, colonel."

"Come on to the men at once, boys," said the old officer cheerfully, for he could not believe his regiment had proved false.

There was hasty mounting and rapid riding, and then they reached the lines. The colonel ordered the call to the parade-ground. But very few, comparatively, of the men obeyed. The others might, however, thought the colonel, be engaged in extinguishing the fire. The light of the flames was so strong that the parade-ground was brilliantly illuminated. There was the little group of Europeans, and before them the knot of sepoys, and on the right the line of blazing bungalows surrounded by a yelling mob.

"Thank God," said one of the sceptics, "the women are safe in the fort!"

"They have n't unharnessed the bullocks from some of the carts, colonel. Let's make a dash for them and carry them off to the fort."

The line of wagons lay to the left between both parties and the fort. The mutineers had left the bullocks in the wagons in order that supplies of ammunition might be at once sent on to the rebel camps in the vicinity.

The old colonel did not speak, — he could not believe his eyes. At last he rode towards the men. A warning voice made him halt. He pulled up for a moment to address them, appealing to his long connection with them and the good character they had lately earned. He begged them to lay down their arms and return to their duty. They did not answer him, but the same voice warned him off. He reined up again, and turned to the group of Europeans.

"Gentlemen," he said in a clear voice, "I fear I am little better than your murderer. I have put implicit confidence in my men, and they have deceived me. I shall make one more effort to preserve you; if I fail, by gad! gentlemen, you must look out each for himself."

They did not altogether understand his purpose, but it was very clear soon. He walked his horse up to the mutineers. They shouted to him to halt.

"It is I who have commanded you hitherto, — I'm not going to change the plan now," he murmured, and then added aloud, "We have served together many years, my men, and I have never doubted your loyalty. I won't do it now."

"Go back, — go back, or we shall fire!" was the answer.

"I can't go back; fire if you like, for, by gad! I'd rather die than live after I have been deceived in you."

At that several of the muzzles pointed at him wavered, and one or two dropped. He thought there was hope in that, as he walked his horse calmly up to the troops. Then there came a sudden flash and a report, and he pressed his hand to his heart, turned to his officers, waved his hand, and fell headlong from the saddle — dead!

And then the sepoys rushed on him, and thrust their bayonets into the lifeless corpse.

"Turn, and bolt for the fort!" said Friston; "they've tasted blood. Carry off what powder-wagons you can."

They turned and set spurs to their horses, and one or two, as they passed, caught the leading-ropes of the bullocks and dragged them along. The sepoys, seeing this, advanced, their numbers increasing rapidly every instant, for the report of the shot that killed the colonel brought them from the burning houses.

The bullocks were slow and weary, and in a few moments the flying group would have been overtaken. But Tom Martindale, who had been the last to turn, — for he did n't like to leave the old soldier's body on the ground, — was equal to the emergency. When he reached the powder-wagons, all the Europeans had passed them, and were goading the oxen on. The wagons, from which the bullocks had been detached, were standing in a row. Riding up to the nearest, he flung up the lid, and, thrusting his revolver up to the lock into a barrel, which chanced apparently to have been opened by the mutineers, he shouted in Hindoostanee, — "You murdering hounds, if any one of you comes a step nearer, by God, I'll blow us all up!"

And in this way he held them at bay till the ammunition had reached the fort, and then he turned round and galloped thither himself at steeple-chase pace, with the bullets whistling round him. But he reached the shelter of the fort in safety.

Without any loss of time they proceeded to put the fort into a state of defence. The light guns from Kolaghur were got into position so as to command the approach. Watches were made up, and the ladies were set to work making cartridges, or took lessons in loading muskets. One of the bullock-train escort was an engineer, so he was appointed inspector of the defences, and examined the place carefully from roof to basement.

His report was favorable, except in one

respect. The base of the fortress was excavated in the rock, and from the size of the excavations and the nature of the stone it seemed to him that it would not be impossible to undermine it; but they hoped and believed none of the sepoys had seen this portion of the interior.

Then, when the guards had been placed and all their preparations made against surprise or assault, they sat down to talk over their position, past, present, and future.

It was impossible to decide when the treachery of the sepoys began, whether their giving up the emissaries of the mutineers at Chillabagh was genuine, or merely done to lull suspicion. It was evident that of late they had only been waiting to obtain possession of the ammunition to break into open rebellion.

Everybody regretted the poor old colonel's loss, though it was impossible not to feel that his over-confidence had given the mutineers their opportunity, — if it had not been the fatal temptation which seduced them. But he had died so courageously, and had attempted to save others at the risk of his own life, and they all felt it and mourned for him.

Tom Martindale, too, came in for a share of praise, and undoubtedly deserved it, for, but for the check he had given to the mutineers, pursuers and pursued would probably have rushed into the fort together, and then all would have been lost. In consideration of this gallantry, Tom was appointed chief officer of the guard, his duties being to station sentinels, make the rounds, and keep on the watch for mining or any attempt to carry the fort by stratagem or assault.

All that night the sky was red with the fires of the European residences in the neighborhood, and there were riot and rapine triumphant in Ungawallah. But the wretches seemed satisfied for the present with the destruction of property and with robbery, and did not come near the fort, from the ramparts of which so many anxious eyes were peering into the darkness, where so many ears were on the alert to hear the tramp of the attacking force, and where brows were knit and teeth were set, and weapons were gripped with angry grasp, till the muscles rose like ropes. For these were Englishmen at bay, and defending their wives and sisters from death, — and worse than death.

In one of the chambers in the basement of the fort sat poor Mary Martindale nursing her first-born. She was a brave little soul and an enduring, but she trembled now, for there was nothing save these old walls between men worse than wild beasts

and her child, — her first darling. Baby had been born soon after the vessel sailed. Tom called him "the sturdy Stepneyite," because the captain of the transport told him that all children born at sea of English parents could claim a settlement in that parish. Baby was an endless source of delight to his mother, who did not seem to feel how long and weary the journey was, and who faced the fatigues and troubles of India boldly, supported by her worship of this infant.

How unconscious of peril and how beautiful he was as he lay in her arms! He was a bonny lad, — a true English baby, though he had been born on the high seas. And he was so like Tom, she thought, with the same eyes and hair, though Tom would have it the boy was more like her. Only a week ago they had sat on the ramparts in the quiet beginning of night, and playfully quarrelled about the babe's likeness; and now here was she watching over his sleep in terror and doubt, while Tom was pacing those lonely walls, exposed to innumerable dangers.

Presently, having gone his rounds, Tom stole down for a few moments to comfort his wife and kiss his child. All was quiet, he reported. The fires were burning out and the crowds dispersing, and they could see in the gray-growing light the men returning to their tents. The morrow was the thing to be looked forward to with anxiety, for then the mutineers would probably declare themselves on a point of importance; they would either strike the camp, and march off to join other insurgents, or they would sit down before the fort and invest it.

Then he returned to his duty again, and the dawn slowly widened to perfect day. Still the mutineers displayed no intention of attacking the fort, but neither did they show any disposition to march off.

Towards evening the hope that they might leave Ungawallah was destroyed. Preparations were made for the reception of another regiment on the parade-ground, and by dusk it marched into the lines and pitched its tents.

Another long night of watching, but still no attempt was made to storm. The little garrison held a council of war. It was suggested that this inactivity was assumed to throw the sentries off their guard, and that when they had by security grown less vigilant an attack would be tried. Others, however, fancied the intention was to starve them out, which was not at all an impossible thing to do, though the stores were by no means short.

In the mean time at intervals heavy cannonading was heard far off, but whether it heralded the success of the British or of the mutineers they could not learn. At times a single sepoy would approach the place and survey it attentively, as if to see if anything had occurred. He was generally made a mark of by half the garrison, who blazed at him until the firing began to get his range, when he would disappear.

They had not been besieged in this way long before sickness made its appearance. The little garrison was sadly weakened by this, and had the sepoys made an attack now they must have carried the place. How grateful the poor fellows were that the enemy apparently lacked courage to attack! They little guessed the real reason of this seeming apathy.

But they were fated to discover it soon.

Wearily the days crawled by, the two parties gazing idly at each other. The mutineers gave themselves up to riot and debauchery, as if they were quite sure of those in the fort, and could take them whenever it was necessary. Before long the beleaguered garrison found that their fresh stores were at an end, and only rice and preserved meats were left. It became necessary to serve out provisions by allowance, — and that a small one. With regard to ammunition, they were pretty well supplied. Powder they had in plenty, and they employed all their leisure time in casting bullets. Anything that chanced to be of metal — down to the albatra spoons of Mrs. Major Mahoney — was cut into slugs for an old-fashioned piece of ordnance mounted on the wall overlooking the gate of the fort.

In the mean time the besieging force is daily swelled by small straggling parties of natives, — some of them deserters from sepoy regiments, others disaffected men who did not belong to the Indian army. Anxious eyes are bent towards the camp every day from the fort, for it is feared that artillery may possibly be waited for by the mutineers. The old fort is strong, but it is very doubtful whether, having been left in bad repair so long, it would resist a cannonade.

But no guns make their appearance, and the Europeans feel reassured, though there is something ominous in the inactivity of the sepoys. The oldest heads in the fort shake sadly, and the most experienced eyes are ever bent on the camp, noting every stir. "There is mischief brewing," say the wise ones, and they are right.

And still, each on the alert, but neither making any show of activity either in the

attack or the defence, the two parties stood at bay.

Day after day for a week the engineer made his inspection and reported all secure. Day after day they watched the tents of the mutineers and saw no sign of danger. Day after day they mounted guard, and kept all prepared for the struggle which was so imminent, — and yet so distant, it seemed.

Night after night for a week Tom Martindale appointed his guards and went his rounds. And then he would creep down to comfort his wife and peep at his sleeping boy. It was his one glimpse of cheer during the day, for constant watching and anxiety had begun to tell on him. He was terribly tired, and pale, and thin, so his wife made him rest awhile, tucking him up with shawls on an easy-chair, and letting him have a nap.

One night, startled by a sudden stir of his, Mary looked up, and saw Tom looking very white and scared.

"What is it, Tom?"

"Hark! Can't you hear anything?"

"No, nothing!"

"Nonsense, Mary! — not hear a grating!"

"O, that! Law, I've heard that for two or three days! It is the rats."

"The what?"

"The rats!"

"It is the mutineers working in their mines within a few yards of this cave!"

CHAPTER XXV.

PROSPECTS OF SPORT.

THE night after her conversation with her brother was spent by Bella in dreams, — not of poor Ted toiling along under an Indian sun, but of an imaginary Irish earl, who had shamrocks instead of pearls on his coronet, and who laid that uncomfortable head-gear at her feet, together with his heart, hand, and those other *et ceteras* which are supposed to be offered up by a noble swell to the object, if not of his affections, at least of his intentions.

It was a restless night for Bella, because something — let us hope it was her conscience, or some other better angel — would not let her dream such dreams quite peacefully. She tossed and turned on her pillow all night, and in the morning, despite the fact that her dreams had been bright with coronets, she found her pillow wet with tears.

As for Philip, he slept the sleep of the unjust, which is, I suppose, a very calm and

sweet sleep, judging from the fact that rather more than half the world go to bed at a reasonable hour, and do not unite to form a Sit-up-all-night Association.

It was one of the beauties of Philip's orderly nature that he could go to sleep when and where he liked. I believe the secret of it consisted in his thinking of business whenever he desired to sink promptly into the arms of Morpheus. He began to argue the case of Spidge v. Patterby, if he felt restless, and the quiet flow of thought floated him into dreamland. The secret is one worth knowing, for I hold it to be an unfailing cure for sleeplessness. Mind, I don't say that you're to bother yourself about your little pecuniary difficulties or your family troubles; not a bit of it,—that's not business. Only just get into the old mill and go round, and you'll doze off directly. If you're a barrister, like Philip, argue a case,—if you are of a literary turn, like an unfortunate friend I have, try and think out the plot of a novel,—if you are a baker, begin to think of the next batch of rolls,—and so on through all the handicrafts. And if my recipe doesn't set you off to sleep in ten minutes I shall be greatly astonished.

Philip was not fool enough when once he had retired to rest to bother himself about the possible result of his little scheme with regard to Bella and Marcus. He quietly settled down to the case of Spidge v. Patterby, which was a question of right of way. Spidge was the happy possessor of a farm, and Patterby was the happy possessor of a strip of land that intersected Spidge's fields. Spidge avowed that the immemorial Spidges had pounded through the mediæval wheat of a long line of Patterbys in order to milk the primeval cows which were their (the immemorial Spidges') property. On the other hand, Patterby alleged that the early Spidges had been guilty of trespass, and had always made those lacteal transgressions in despite of warning and resistance, and that therefore no right had been established; but, on the contrary, the Spidges, having been ignominiously driven with blows from the strip of land in the occupancy of the Patterby ancestry, had, by not seeking a redress at law, admitted that they were in the wrong.

But we are keeping Philip awake in the most unreasonable manner by this long description. He had only got so far in the case as "My lud, and gentlemen of the jury, this is a question of right of way arising between the occupiers of a certain messuage," when he fell into a sound and refreshing slumber. While poor Bella was dreaming of coronets,

he was snoring in happy unconsciousness. How much better it is, then, to be a young, rising, and popular barrister than a romantic young lady who is not off with the old love, and has n't yet seen the new!

The night went its way quietly. It did not loiter because Philip was sleeping so quietly, nor did it hasten away in order to shorten Bella's disturbed slumbers. The moon sailed on its way calmly, and the stars watched her down the sky, and then by and by saw a silver haze gathering in the east. Presently the silver glowed into gold, and a warm tremulous stir in the air told of the rising sun. The birds began to twitter and chirp inquiringly,—perhaps asking one another about the exact hour when the first worm would be due. The lark, not being immediately interested in the question, shook the dew out of his feathers and went up to get the earliest glimpse of that devotion of his, the sun, whom he greets first at morn and takes the latest sobbing adieu of at night. When he had finished matins he came down again, and became interested in worms, like every other respectable bird,—you see, even a poet has a family to keep, and ought not to neglect his domestic duties.

Philip rose soon after the lark. He made no attempt to soar upward, like that holy-minded little bird. He unlocked his portmanteau and took out his dressing-case. From that he extracted a little morocco box which contained six razors. A Sabbatarian must have conceived the lovely design of arranging this pleasant series of scrapers, with one for every day in a week except Sunday. Philip chose the Thursday razor,—the day was engraved on the back of the implement,—and proceeded to take off the stubble. Philip was one of your artistic barristers, who, seeing the fitness of things, never grow mustache, beard, or whiskers, to interfere with the effect of the wig. Such a system had the additional advantage of making Philip seem quite a lad, and in his wig he was really imposing.

This sacrifice of his personal comfort to the exigencies of his professional appearance made Philip's early rising a source of real agony to him. The tender chin, accustomed to the firm and delicate treatment of a first-rate barber residing near the Temple, felt the strong difference between cold and hot water for the operation, no less than the difference between a sharp razor and a sharpened bit of barrel-hoop, such as this blade appeared in unaccustomed hands.

But by and by the operation was accomplished, and Philip went down to the stables

and ordered the groom to put the chestnut mare in the dog-cart and bring it round in about half an hour. Then he went indoors and had his breakfast, a cup of chocolate and some dry toast. By the time he had finished that frugal repast the chestnut mare was pawing the gravel at the front door, so he lit a cigar and mounted the box. In a few minutes he was spinning along towards Scalperton at about six miles an hour. The squire had a nice stud, and the chestnut was the cream of it, if I may be allowed the expression.

Philip was at the station a few minutes before Marcus's train was due. The station-master walked up to him and touched his cap.

"Good morning, Holliday," said Philip.

"Good morning, sir. A cold morning for a drive from Bremning. Here's a telegram for you, sir," and Mr. Holliday handed Philip one of the ordinary slips of inferior paper whereon was scrawled in that usual misspelt and illegible hand which seems common to all telegraph clerks, "M. Lysaght, London, to Philip Charwood, Railway Station, Scalperton. Missed train. Shall come by the next leaving town. Don't keep carriage waiting for me. I'll fly."

"Fly!" said Philip to himself; "not you, my boy! You'll no more fly than the founder of the family of the penguins, who, if Darwin be right, was such an indolent bird that he lost his wings from sheer neglect to exercise them. But I suppose your notion of flying is travelling at about three miles an hour in a box on four wheels and drawn by a hired horse." And Philip laughed at his own joke.

It was one of the weakest points in Philip's character that he always enjoyed and repeated his *bon-mots*. It was a fault born of inordinate vanity and self-confidence. When he was on circuit he used to bore the men terribly with, — "I said rather a good thing to Thingumbob the other day," or, "Did you hear my joke about What's-his-name?" His forensic brothers christened him, "Charwood's Echo," which was rather severe, — but he did n't mind it. He was too self-satisfied not to be good-tempered.

"I'll wait for the old boy, though," he continued, musing, — "I'll wait if he does n't come till midnight," which sounded very like warmth of affection, but was not entirely that. It was necessary, as my readers will remember, that Philip should have time to prime his friend before he introduced him to the domestic circle at Bremning Minor.

He has an hour and a half to wait for the next train from town, so he jumps into the

dog cart and drives to Scalperton, which is about half a mile from the station. He puts up at the Babryngton Arms and has a little lunch, and then plays a game at billiards with the marker. He is remarkably fond of billiards, is Philip, and so he kills the time pleasantly enough until the waiter comes to tell him the dog-cart is ready and the train due in about ten minutes.

"Hang it! I hope he has n't missed this train, too," says Philip, pulling up at the door of the station, as the long snake-like string of carriages comes gliding under the bridge to the platform.

He has n't missed this train. In a few minutes he is observed getting out of a first-class compartment, and Philip goes up and shakes hands.

"Well, old boy, how are you? I was really surprised at a man of your punctuality missing the train."

"How are you, Philip? Come, none of your chaff. It was the cabman's fault, — could n't get him to push along, — told him he'd better tie his horse up behind a bus as it would help him on, and he turned sulkily. But, hullo! I must look after my luggage, or it will be going to the deuce, or whatever the terminus of this confounded line may happen to be."

So they go to the luggage-van, and Marcus identifies his property, — a portmanteau, a dressing-case, and a gun-case. The sight of this last reminds him of one object of his visit.

"Had any shooting yet, Phil?"

"No, not yet. I left it till you came down."

"How are the birds?"

"Meaker says there are lots of coveys, and they have n't been disturbed at all, so we shall have good sport."

"Hooray! But I say, Phil, I hope the country is n't very heavy. I hate making a business of pleasure."

"You lazy beggar! But it's not bad country, — and if you don't like it we can always tie a few by the leg on the lawn for you."

"You be hanged with your impudence!"

"Impudence? Why, I was only proposing a battue, which is a system specially adapted for men of your active disposition."

"Look out, Phil! I'm not your equal at chaff, but I could knock your head off in two seconds if I tried."

In this way the two friends bantered each other until the luggage had been placed in the cart; they took their seats, and drove off. Then Philip opened a more serious conversation.

"I say, Marcus, old boy, I want you to do me a kindness."

"With pleasure, Phil."

"Well, you see when I came down here I found a pretty row on. I'd had some intimation of it, which was the reason I did n't ask you to come down with me. The governor and my sister had had a serious quarrel, and I had to make it up. It seems some brother of the parson at Brenning, a poor devil without any money and a mere nobody, has been making a fool of her. She never sees a soul down here, and I dare say his attentions were pleasant, and the governor kicked up a row, which only made matters worse, for a woman, not to speak it profanely, is not unlike a pig, — attempt to drive her one way and she bolts in directly the opposite direction!"

"This from Philip Charwood, the mirror of chivalry!"

"Hang the mirror of chivalry! one must speak the truth sometimes."

"As a lawyer, Phil, you must find the change quite refreshing."

"Do be serious, old boy, for a few minutes."

"I'm attention itself."

"Let's see, where was I? — O, about the quarrel. Well, she went off to the parson's in a huff, and I had to fetch her back. Now, what I want you to do is this, — I want you to pay just the ordinary attentions a gentleman pays to every lady. She is not used to that sort of thing, and without committing yourself you might do a real service, by curing her of her nonsense."

"I shall be delighted, old fellow. Shall I punch the chap's head for you?"

"Well, you boasted of your science just now, so if that will enable you to punch the head of a fellow who is serving in India at this moment, you may do it."

"A soldier, eh?"

"Yes. I don't know how he got his commission; he's in the Line."

"O, there were lots of commissions going begging during the war. My cousin was in a cavalry regiment that used to be a crack one before the war, but it got swamped with all sorts of odd fellows then, and it will be years before it recovers its prestige, — used to be one of the most expensive messes in the service, — champagne opened every day. But go on."

"I've nothing more to tell, except that we are not unnaturally anxious to keep the beggar out of the family. You see Bella —"

"Is that your sister's name? It's a very pretty one."

"Yes, — I rather like it. Well, she's

very romantic; she has been allowed the run of all the novels in the library, and her head's full of sentimental nonsense. You can pitch it strong on that line, for you read a good deal of that sort of rubbish."

"He calls the literature of his country rubbish!"

"That part of it, at all events. Why, hang it, you never met with a novelist in your life who could write a correct account of a trial, and yet they pretend to powers of observation."

"You're rather hard on them, Phil. A chap could n't become a judge or a barrister even by mere force of observation."

"Don't argue with me, sir, for that is a science I know something about, and I could knock your head off at that in a few seconds. Experience makes a man a judge or a barrister, and experience is the result of observation. Shut up!"

"With alacrity. I never attempt to chop logic with you."

They had reached the top of a hill whence they had a good view of Brenning Minor.

"There's the house, old boy," said Philip, "and that low roof beyond is the parsonage. The church is a fine specimen of early English."

"It's a pretty spot."

"I believe you; you'll say so when you go through the village. It is one of the most picturesque in the county. The governor takes a great pride in it, — keeps the cottage gardens neat, and all that sort of thing."

"His tenants are lucky in having so liberal a landlord."

"Humph! Well, I don't know. You see he has a great eye for the picturesque, and as a noble peasantry, the country's pride, looks better when a little dilapidated and seedy, like an old ruin, the governor does n't spoil 'em with too much prosperity, — in fact, you'll find the villagers remarkably picturesque, quite like scarecrows."

"I'm afraid I sha'n't appreciate the beauty, Phil; I'm so used to it in Ireland. But then, of course, there's no sort of clan-ship or loyalty over here as there is with us. The landlord there is often a sort of foster-brother to his whole tenantry, and if the poor beggars go ragged and wretched it's because he can't help them, for he never gets any rent."

"O, I know that lamentable disorganization of the law of landlord and tenant; but it's wearing out very fast, thank goodness."

By this time they were entering the village. Though clad in autumn tints, it was

looking very lovely, and there was a good deal of greenery about, for the old squire was wise enough to plant evergreens at all available points, so that even in winter there was some leafage to be seen.

"Egad! it is a pretty village, Phil!"

"Yes, the old boy has spared no money on it,—spends a good deal more than I should. When it comes to me I shall let it go down a bit. I don't care much for the country, and should n't waste on hedges the tin that would keep one comfortably in London. But here we are, at the house."

They drove up the gravel sweep to the front door. Bella was at the library window. Marcus took off his hat.

"What a handsome, gentlemanly man!" thought she, "and what a graceful bow! I should have guessed he was a peer, from his noble bearing, like the Viscount of Vallice in *Gold and Guilt*. I wonder how old he is!"

"By the way, Marcus," said Philip, as they pulled up, "I forgot to tell you that this silly girl has got the notion out of some high-flown novel that two men cannot be friends as we are without entering into a compact signed with blood to marry each other's nearest female relatives."

"My nearest female relative is my grandmother."

"Then don't tell her so; let her believe you have a sister."

"I don't mind,—anything you like."

"All right,—but, mum! here she comes. Bella, my dear, this is my very dear friend and companion, the Honorable Marcus Lysaght. Marcus, my sister, Miss Bella Charwood. There, now, that's over. And now, Bella, have you got any luncheon for him, for he must be starved?"

Bella expressed a belief that luncheon was laid in the breakfast-room, if they would step that way. So they proceeded to that pleasant apartment, looking out into the park. There they found the squire decanting some choice Madeira in honor of the new guest.

"This is my father, Marcus. Governor, this is my chum Marcus."

"Very delighted to make your acquaintance, sir,—very delighted. My son has often promised to prevail on you to come down and have a little sport, and I am very glad you have come at last. It's a capital season for birds. I saw Meaker, my keeper, this morning, and he promises plenty of coveys. Take a seat,—here on my right, sir. Now what can I offer you?"

In this way the squire pressed his hospitality on his son's friend, for he was really delighted to see the man who was to clear

up all difficulties and confer distinction on the family by marrying Bella.

Marcus little suspected the trap his bosom friend was laying for him.

CHAPTER XXVI.

TRUE AGAINST ODDS.

It was not until the third day after his arrival, when he had already made considerable progress in Bella's favor, that Marcus Lysaght was met by Mrs. James Harding. Bella had been showing him some of the prettiest views in the immediate neighborhood, for, by some strange fatality, Philip was always being wanted by the squire in the study. He had to be always apologizing to his friend, and handing him over for Bella to amuse. Meanwhile the partridges—the declared reason for Marcus's visit—had a fine time of it, for, in spite of repeated hints from Meaker, Philip and Marcus and the squire never once shouldered barrel for the whole of the first week.

The country is undoubtedly a "den of a place"—to borrow a phrase from Marcus—for young people to fall in love with one another in. They can moon about town, and stare into shop-windows to admire the odds and ends displayed there, without thinking much of one another. But in the country it is quite impossible to be unconscious of a lovely creature tripping over the greensward at your side. You cannot be utterly oblivious of a neat little ankle that you get a glimpse of at the stile. O, those stiles! they certainly were invented by Cupid for the special purpose of match-making. There is such squeezing of hands and leaning on shoulders,—such displays of manly regard and female timidity, ending very often in a shriek, a slip, and the landing of the giddy young thing upon the susceptible bosom of her natural protector.

Bella, when she was by herself, could manage to get over the stile, if not with grace, at least with ease and activity; but I suppose the presence of Marcus made her nervous, for she certainly required a great amount of support, encouragement, and assistance.

She had met once or twice in her course of novel-reading with declarations and other love-business being transacted at stiles. Claude declared his passion to Arabella (in *The Plighted Hearts*), Julia reproached Edward with his attentions to Clara (in *The Woman of no Heart*), Sir Charles renounced Emilia forever (in *Rank and Ruin*), and

Lady Deverall told her passion to Louis (in *Choosing Beneath Her*) at a stile! In fact, if we may believe novel-writers, the whole of existence turns on a stile; but, to be sure, this sort of stile is often the only one of which they are possessed, so they may well make the most of it.

There was one stile in Bremning Minor that was really an awkward stile. It was called, locally, Elemen Gate, not with any reference to earth, air, fire, or water, but because it was made of elm. And a very crabbed elm it must have been, — an elm intended for the coffins of misers and other eccentric characters, — to have supplied such gnarled, crooked, and cantankerous small timbers as formed the Elemen Gate.

These timbers took each its own way; each struck out a line, and a very crooked one, for itself. The top bar had a downward bend in the middle, but the second had a lateral bulge that quite took away all the advantage of the top one, and then the bottom one had a corkscrew turn of mind, and was rather unstable in its fixing, so that if you relied on it, it generally gave way when you least expected.

It was over the Elemen Gate that Marcus was assisting Bella when Prue first became aware of his presence in the village.

It was a lovely autumn day, and Prue had brought little Prue out in a perambulator. She and James had been over to the extreme limit of the parish to see a sick person, and as they returned he had called in to speak to Betty Tanner about her grandson's non-attendance at the Sunday school. As baby objected violently to be taken into the cottages, and Prue was not over-anxious to introduce her to an atmosphere which is not always the most wholesome, it was agreed that mother and child should wait outside.

So baby, having been supplied with a handful of daisies, was affecting to be deeply delighted with their perfume, and Prue was sitting on her shawl spread on the grass beside the perambulator, when the sound of voices on the farther side of the hedge became audible.

Prue looked up, and saw a young and rather good-looking man vault lightly over the stile, and turn round to assist his companion. That companion proved to be Bella.

"O, what a horrid stile it is! I shall slip, — O dear!"

"Pray lean on me. I'll support you."

"O, please go on, and I'll get over by myself." But she did n't leave go of his hand.

"Not on any account. You might sprain

your ankle. It is a most dangerous stile. There now, give me both hands."

"O, I'm so nervous. O dear! I shall fall!"

"Lean on me, — don't be afraid."

"Ah, oh! O, I shall fall!"

And fall she did. She had just reached the topmost bar, and therefore fell straight into Marcus's arms, who caught her easily, and with a satisfied and happy air, as if he wished that life consisted entirely of assisting Bella over Elemen Gate.

But it so happened that, falling somewhat sideways into her companion's arms, and with her head over his shoulder, Bella was so placed that her eyes met those of Prue. Immediately she turned as red as fire, and, extricating herself, with a little shriek she sank back on the stile.

"My dearest girl," said Marcus, with great *empressment*, "I fear you have hurt yourself! Pray tell me."

"O no, dear, — I mean Mr. Lysaght, — I was only a little startled."

"O," thought our Prudence, "they have begun to call each other 'dear' already," — and Prue felt a sharp pang by sympathy for poor absent Ted.

"Take care, there's some one there," whispered Bella, hastily.

Marcus turned. Bella came forward and held out her hand to Prue.

"O, dear Mrs. Harding, I am so pleased to see you! I've been such a naughty girl not to run over and see you. But you know we have a visitor, — let me introduce you. Mrs. Harding — the Honorable Marcus Lysaght. A great friend of my brother's, my dear Mrs. Harding."

"Delighted to make Mr. Lysaght's acquaintance, I am sure," said Prue, but the tone did not harmonize with the words. "Have you heard from Edward, Bella?" she continued. Even Prue could n't, under the circumstances, resist that very feminine shot.

Bella winced and blushed.

"O, dear, no! I don't expect to hear now. People so soon forget promises to write."

"Or promises of any sort," said Prue, bitterly.

"Surely, Mrs. Harding, as a married woman and mistress of a house, knows what brittle material pie-crust is," said Marcus, coming to Bella's rescue. He saw she was in a difficulty, though he could n't quite see what it was.

"It is not a good thing to build your hopes on," said Prue.

"And a very bad thing for the digestion," said Marcus.

"What a horrid impudent puppy!" thought the lady.

"What a cantankerous little woman!" mused the gentleman.

Poor Bella was very uncomfortable in the mean time. She was terribly afraid Prue would say something that would reveal to Marcus that she was engaged, and she was anything but anxious to have that fact revealed, for he was very attentive and agreeable.

"How is dear Mr. Harding?" she asked, in hopes of turning the conversation into a new channel.

"Do you mean Edward, or my husband?" said the provoking Prue.

"O, your husband, of course," was the petulant answer. "I don't suppose Mr. Edward Harding troubles himself to write to anybody."

"Well, if he does not write to a certain person, Bella dear, I suppose no one else has a right to expect to hear from him."

Bella did not choose to hear this.

"Here is Mr. Harding, I do declare!" she said, going to meet James. "How are you, dear Mr. Harding? O, that was such a beautiful sermon, last Sunday! and please do pray tell me how is that dear old Betty Tanner, and when may I come and teach in the Sunday school, and won't you have decorations of evergreens at Christmas, and if so, may n't I do the chancel all myself?"

In this way, by asking about twenty questions, Bella hoped to keep James off the theme of his brother, and she was right. James saw there was a stranger present, so he spared her blushes and did not inquire whether she had heard from Edward. Then, like a good husband and father, he wheeled Prue the second down the field to the gate, and took the perambulator through it, while the others made the short cut by the stile.

I suppose Bella did not care to continue her walk with Marcus for fear, perhaps, of asking too many questions. So she suggested to him that they should walk back with Mr. and Mrs. Harding and that "dear darling duck of a baby."

"Allow me to help you over the stile," said Marcus, politely, to Mrs. Harding.

"O, dear, no, thank you, I would n't trouble you. I'm not a native of the place, you know, Mr. Lysaght, but I have to go about a good deal alone, and if I could not climb stiles should have my walks sadly restricted."

This was meant for a quiet thrust at Bella, but that young lady affected not to hear it, and paid great attention to baby.

"Have you been in this part of the world before, Mr. Lysaght?" asked James

when Bella introduced him to her companion.

"No; this is my first visit," was the answer. "I came down on the 14th."

Reflection by Prudence:—"You are on pretty good terms with Bella, then, considering how short the acquaintance is."

"It's a pretty village, don't you think so? And the surrounding land is very good. By the way, do you shoot?" said James.

"O yes! I'm an ardent sportsman,—in fact, it was to have a blaze at the birds that Philip asked me to come down."

"What sport have you had?"

"Well, to tell the truth, we have n't been out yet. Philip has been engaged almost every day on business with his father, and so our excursion has been put off."

Reflection by Prudence:—"You are an ardent sportsman, and came down for the shooting; but you have been here a week, and have not fired a gun!"

In this way they wandered homeward across the field. As they reached the gate which opened on the main road, Philip rode up. He stopped and took off his hat politely.

Marcus had prevailed on Bella, who, for reasons of her own, was pretending to be tired, to take his arm. Philip, seeing this, could not resist a quiet smile of satisfaction, and just as it was dying away his eyes met those of Prue. She had seen and interpreted the smile, and he knew it. They looked at one another defiantly; it was a declaration of war.

"James," said Prue to her husband when they reached home, "that Philip Charwood has brought down that friend of his on purpose that he may pay attention to Bella."

"And try to cut out Ted, eh? Well, my best of little women, if she can't be true to him in spite of absence and the attention of an Honorable, it is better that he should be undeceived at once."

"O, don't talk in that matter-of-fact, business sort of way, James! It would break Edward's heart."

James had his own private opinion as to the frangibility of that organ, but he did n't say anything.

"What a mean, cunning creature Philip Charwood is! Do you know, James, I think I shall hate lawyers."

"Well, Prue, I should advise you to have nothing to do with them professionally, but I have met with very nice and really good men who followed the law."

"O, I hate lawyers,—there!"

What a strange commotion this was for a temper usually so gentle and quiet as

Prue's ! James was a little astonished. The truth was, Prudence felt that if Bella proved false to Ted it would imply that she, Prudence, had not been worthy of the trust Edward had confided to her. It was very odd, she thought, that neither Bella nor they had heard from Ted since the day of his sailing.

She even worked herself into a belief, so romantic as to be worthy of Bella herself, that the squire intercepted Edward's letters at the post-office. Indeed, when she came to think of it, the postman had obtained the situation through Mr. Charlwood's influence.

But she was laughed out of the idea by James as soon as she suggested it to him.

However, Prue made up her mind to fight Ted's battle stoutly. Hitherto she had kept aloof, but now she insisted on James's going up to the Manor-house with her, and calling on Mr. Lysaght. And she was perpetually dropping in to see Bella, and staying an unconscionable time. Bella soon learnt the motive of this, and Philip was quite shrewd enough to see it. He told his father, who made himself as disagreeable as he possibly could to Prue, but she was not to be routed.

It was terrible work for the sensitive little woman to thrust herself on people who so clearly wished her away. Bella's coldness, Philip's sneers, and the rudeness of old Charlwood were bitter things to suffer, but she bore them meekly, pretending not to perceive them.

James was at first at a loss to understand the sudden charm which the Manor-house had for Prue. When she told him why she went, and described the martyrdom she suffered, he was still more surprised.

"But, my dear Prue, why struggle against fate? She is a worthless, heartless girl, and even if you succeeded in dislodging this pretender, the next man who paid her attention would win her heart as easily. Better surrender."

"My dear James, I am like the Old Guard. I die, but never surrender."

"Your position is not worth the loss of life, Prue, to carry out your military simile. How pugnacious she has become all of a sudden !"

"I can't help its being worthless. It is my duty to defend it, and I will, too !"

"Better retire in good order, with your face to the enemy. It would be wiser."

"Sir, wisdom has nothing to do with it. Wisdom is a noble assistant where one is in doubt and difficulty. I have a duty to perform, and wisdom can only tell me what I know already. Duty before everything !"

"Then you refuse to surrender? The odds are heavily against you. There is heavy cavalry, say, represented by Lysaght ; infantry, that's the silly child herself ; skirmishers, Philip Charlwood, with a very galling fire ; and the squire himself as heavy artillery."

"Surrender?" said Prue, snatching up a paper-knife from the study-table, and flourishing it as if it were a sword. "Surrender! Never. Up guards, and at them! There, don't you think I have a fine martial spirit?"

"Marvellous! It is a pity it should be lost. I ought to have been a lieutenant-general, evidently, instead of a humdrum parson."

"You're a dear old goose, and I'm a very riotous young person," said Prue, kissing him fondly on the forehead ; "but seriously, James dear, I cannot give up Edward's trust without a hard struggle."

And she did not. Day after day she faced the enemy, and bore all their attacks unflinchingly. It was bitter work, for often the tears were nearly forcing their way. And she felt her self-respect wounded, too, for she had to force her way into the house, almost. The servants would say Bella was out, — that everybody was out, and Prue would answer, "O, it did n't matter, she'd call again, or she'd take a stroll in the garden and wait!" and she would wander round the house because she knew she would come upon them in some of the rooms, which all had windows opening on the lawn.

What plagued Philip most was the watch that Prue kept to prevent Marcus and Bella from making solitary and sentimental rambles. As sure as the young people made the attempt, Prue used to appear in some strange way, and offer to go for a stroll with them.

In vain did Philip and Marcus start off early in the morning for some shooting, having made arrangements to lunch at a certain covert, where Bella was to join them at noon. In vain did Bella steal out of the house as if she were trying to escape the vigilant eye of the police. Prudence seemed ubiquitous.

I believe that even Martha Ogleby was once stimulated to wonder for about three seconds and a half "what had come to mis-sus to take her out of doors so frequent."

"Hang it all!" said Philip, worn out with this long game of cross-purposes ; "hang it all! this is downright persecution. I must see what we can do to stop this. We must try and offend them. I'll go and tell Harding that the governor re-

fuses to let him have that two hundred per annum. Perhaps he'll cut up rough at that, and then we shall get rid of them."

But in reality poor Prue's hard fight did not damage Philip's plans, since Marcus, out of sheer opposition, began to press his suit with Bella more ardently than he had first intended.

She was pretty, he felt, and she was likely to be well off, and what did he want more? She would do him credit by her appearance, and would have money enough to pay her own milliner's bills. It did not occur to him that anything further was needed to constitute matrimonial happiness.

As for Bella, she had wished to carry on a flirtation with Marcus, and then at the end, when he declared himself, intended to say that she was engaged, that she pitied him and wished him to forgive her folly, — which was the course adopted by Bianca in *A Lover's Revenge*. But Marcus was a fascinating fellow, and he was a nobleman, and he made love so romantically, that Bella became desperately in love with him, and persuaded herself that Edward's silence was a sufficient justification.

And now the visit of Philip and Marcus was drawing to a close, and all parties knew that some decisive steps must be taken before long. And each prepared for the struggle.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE SIEGE OF UNGAWALLAH.

THE discovery which Tom Martindale made, that the mutineers were busy driving a mine under the fort, was not a thing to go to sleep upon. He lost not a moment in alarming the little garrison, and called a council of war on the spot where he had made the discovery. There was no time to waste in long debate; the mutineers were at work below, and they had large supplies of powder; at any minute they might blow the fort into the air, and bury its defenders among its ruins.

Bold as the little force was, there were unmistakable signs of dismay on all countenances. The mutineers had discovered their weak point, and, having once driven a mine, might, even if beaten out of that, drive others until they succeeded by mere force of numbers.

It was determined to countermine immediately. As many as could be spared from sentry duty were told off for the work, and were divided into two parties, so as to relieve each other, and keep up the driving of the countermine day and night. They

soon found that the sepoys were taking things easy, only working for a few hours in the day, and then not doing it with a will, whereas the little garrison toiled for dear life. As they began to get close to the sepoys they were obliged to work carefully, knocking off when the others were driving, and only pushing on at night. It was evident the sepoys were not working entirely at hap-hazard, for they were driving their mine to the very centre of the fort. It was supposed that they believed the basement of the building was unoccupied, not calculating on its having been allotted to the ladies, because, though unpleasant, it was at least safe. Sometimes the noise of the spades and pickaxes was plainly audible, and sorely terrified the poor women, who thought the sepoys would burst up through the floor every minute.

At last the besieged and the besiegers were but about a pickaxe length apart in their galleries. Early one evening, as soon as the Sepoys had retired from their workings, the Englishmen broke down the slight barrier between the mines, and explored the enemy's ground. They found some of the powder already stored. They had not done their work a day too soon!

The powder was immediately removed to the fort. Then a small party set to work to build a solid earthwork across the tunnel beyond the junction of the two mines. It was pierced for muskets, so that the enemy could be held at bay effectually.

Before, however, the earthwork was quite completed, the engineer called Tom Martindale on one side, and proposed that they should explore the mine to its mouth. Tom at once assented, and, giving directions to the others what to do in case they came back pursued by the enemy, they took their drawn sword and revolvers, and crawled away into the darkness.

The sepoys kept little watch and ward. They were apparently so secure of the little garrison that they neglected the most common precautions necessary in the face of an enemy, or else they were not sufficiently in awe of the commanders of their own choosing to be very perfect in discipline.

There was not even a sentry at the mouth of the mine. As Tom and the engineer crawled to the edge of the hollow in which it was excavated, all was quiet, — it was a perfectly still, starlight night. Behind them rose the fort; in front was a ridge of ground on which stood the powder-wagons that had been seized by the mutineers; beyond that was the camp. The spot had been well selected, for a clump of trees and a ruined

ungalow effectually concealed the working from the fort.

As they stood at the entrance of the mine, Tom and his companion seemed like escaped prisoners. It was so like freedom to breathe fresh air beyond the walls of the fort.

"I say, Martindale," said the engineer at last, "look at those powder-wagons! I wish we had got them here!"

"I'm afraid it can't be done," said Tom, calculating chances.

"No," said the other; but added, after a moment, "We might blow 'em up, though."

"By Jove, that's a good idea! Have you any powder?"

"No, but we can fetch some."

"We mustn't both leave this; you go back and bring up some fellows with a couple of bags, and then we'll do it. I'll wait and mount guard."

Back hurried the engineer with all speed, leaving Tom to his lonely watch. But it was not long if it was lonely. The engineer and two others speedily emerged from the mine with a bag of powder apiece.

Tom insisted on performing the dangerous task; he knew the ground well, for his own quarters had been close by. So he was allowed to go, the others envying him the glory, but giving place to him in order to insure more certainly the success of a scheme that would be so useful to the besieged.

Tom tied the powder-bags round his waist; he only took two with him, and in one of these he cut a little slit with his sword.

"It will make a train as I go," he whispered to the engineer, "so if I'm caught at the wagon, and cut down, or seized, you'll be able to light it. Never mind me, for I'd as lief be blown up as hacked in pieces by those devils. Good by."

"Good by!"

They all shook him by the hand and said good by, for it was indeed a desperate venture.

Crouching down, he crawled away on hands and knees, and was soon lost in the gloom.

What an age it seemed to the watchers, and how loud their hearts seemed to beat, as they strained their eyes towards the ridge where the wagons stood! So acute was their hearing rendered, that they trembled now and then as a twig snapped or a bough rustled where the young soldier was stealing along.

At last the engineer gave a long sigh of relief, and the others, following the direction of his eyes, saw Tom's head and shoulders

showing above the crest. But he disappeared again almost immediately, and to their horror a dark figure rose from the other side of the ridge, and came apparently to the very spot where Tom was concealed. It began to descend the hill, and then they saw Tom spring up behind it, and then there was the flash of his sword, and a dull crash in the brushwood. They saw Tom bend over the fallen man a moment, and then, rising, steal forward towards the wagons. They saw, as he stood out clear against the sky, that he had taken a cloak or blanket and a turban from his victim.

In a few moments he was back among them, safe! He told them that, as he was making his way up the slope, he heard some one approaching in the other direction. He peeped over and reconnoitred, and saw a noncommissioned officer approaching. It at once occurred to him that he might be going on his rounds alone, and would possibly visit the mine. "I did n't like it altogether, but I felt I must drop him as quietly as I could, so I slipped on one side and cut him down as he passed. It was a good thing there was n't much noise, for when I got to the wagons I saw three or four fellows asleep, — supposed to be guarding the powder, I imagine. But I had slipped on the man's cloak and head-gear, so I was n't afraid. And now, where's the other powder-bag? We'll blow in the mouth of the mine, and so spoil their work as soon as we have sent the wagons into the sky."

The powder-bag was carried into the mine, and then Tom, stooping over the train, struck a spark with flint and steel. A little spirt of flame followed — prtt, prtt, fizz! It ran along the ground in a little thread of flame, — here and there very slender where only a few grains had fallen, but where Tom had delayed or turned about much, shooting up in a vivid sheet. But the whole train had gone off in half the time it takes to write this, and then there came a sudden rush of dull flame into the air, followed by half a dozen reports, as by twos and threes the wagons exploded, and a great fiery cloud of smoke spread over the ridge where the wagons had lately stood.

Tom did n't wait outside to admire the phenomenon. As soon as the train was alight he laid the other in the mine. When the great explosion came, they just took a hurried glance to satisfy themselves, and retreated along the gallery.

But in a short time the whole rebel camp was in commotion. Orders and counter-orders, shouts of alarm, and cries of rage

were heard on all sides, and no one could quite learn the extent of the damage, while none could guess its cause.

Of the men who had been placed to guard the wagons only a few blackened and scorched fragments were found. But a further search led the mutineers to the body of the noncommissioned officer, which, lying out of the direct line of the explosion, below the brow of the ridge, was undisfigured, except by an ugly sword-cut, which divided the organs of benevolence, veneration, and firmness.

At the sight of this it was conjectured either that the besieged had made a sortie, or that some reinforcement had arrived.

But the mystery did not remain long unsolved. While the mutineers were discussing the question, there came a low, heavy, rumbling sound that seemed to shake the earth; immediately a great upheaving of the ground took place between the fort and the mouth of the mine, a great puff of smoke and flame followed, and then the ground fell in. And so the labor of some weeks was thrown away for the mutineers, who besides lost several men and a great stock of powder.

"Martindale," said the engineer as they emerged from the counter-mine, "you deserve the Victoria Cross for that."

"And don't I wish I may get it!" said Tom, as he flung himself down on his rough couch and fell into a refreshing sleep; he had hardly closed his eyes for three days and nights.

There was great joy in the little garrison over the doings of this eventful night. But the wiser ones felt that this was only a respite. The enemy would return to the attack with greater vigor, and would be all the more savage for the repulse. Then the thought came that Ungawallah was out of the ordinary routes of European troops in marching from one great station to another, and that therefore there was little chance of a relief.

Things were still very gloomy for the gallant little garrison. As some of the old hands predicted, the enemy came on in force next day, and attempted to carry the fort by storm. Once they succeeded in planting their ladders at one part of the wall, while an attack was made on another with such impetuosity that the whole of the little garrison assembled to repel it.

Luckily, the first mutineer who scaled the ladder was shot down the moment he set foot on the wall, and in another minute the ladder was flung down into the moat.

All behaved admirably in the fort. The ladies were untiring in loading, and civil-

ians as well as soldiers fought like veterans. The guns from Kholaghur did noble work, and the slugs, which had once been Mr. Major O'Mahoney's albatra spoons, were delivered by the old gun over the gate with telling effect.

There were only two or three slight casualties in the garrison, but the slaughter of sepoys was considerable. Towards noon they retired to their lines, carrying off their killed and wounded. And the attack was not begun again that day, which was a great relief to the little garrison, worn out with watching, with working, and with fighting.

It so chanced that on the afternoon of this very day, as the 203d Berkshire Rifles were camping, a native made his appearance and demanded an interview with the commanding officer. It was rather lucky for that native that the men had had a long hot march and were tired; for the stories of cruelty, and indeed the traces of it they had met with, had made them ferocious, and to see a native and to shoot at him were almost simultaneous occurrences. No doubt the innocent occasionally suffered with the guilty, but there was some excuse for our fellows. It was lucky, therefore, for this native, that he turned up when the men were asleep or lying down, and when the sentry to whom he surrendered happened to be in a merciful mood from sheer weariness. And if it was lucky for the native it was lucky for others, too, for he had come to inform the colonel that an English garrison was besieged by a largely superior force of sepoys at Ungawallah, a town about fifteen miles westward along the river.

This information was at first received with doubt. It was believed that it was a ruse to delay the regiment on its march to Lucknow, but the native produced a scrap of paper, on which was written, — "This man is loyal to the British cause. He has saved myself and three others, concealing us in his village at the risk of his own life. GEORGE MCINTOSH." The colonel had heard of the escape of Mr. McIntosh, another civilian, and two officers, and of its being effected by a native. He therefore asked the man a few questions which satisfied him of his identity, and then called his officers together and told them of the information he had received.

The native begged of them to lose no time, as the rebels were mining the place and intended to blow it up.

The colonel immediately broke up the encampment, told his men of the imminent peril of their countrymen and countrywo-

men at Ungawallah, and marched at once on the fort.

Edward Harding questioned the native about the troops at Ungawallah and how he had learned their position, and the man was very communicative. At last Edward found that he had come up the river in a boat which was moored a little way down stream. The native told him he should take to the boat as soon as they reached it, for the river was a rapid one, and with a fair wind he should outstrip the regiment, and might, perhaps, find some means of conveying intelligence of the coming succors to the besieged garrison.

As soon as Edward learnt this he exerted his utmost eloquence to prevail on the colonel to let him go on and announce the approach of the regiment. The colonel objected strongly at first, but eventually gave in. And then Ted had to do his work over again, for the native declined to take him, — it would be sacrificing both their lives. At last, however, as it would be dark when they got to Ungawallah, and as Ted promised to lie under a heap of leaves and nets in the bottom of the boat, he was allowed to embark, and before long was skimming the turbid yellow waters of the river, half smothered by the unsavory nets and other redolent odds and ends in which he was buried.

At last, just after dark, the native ran his boat ashore on a small islet, on which he landed, leaving Ted in the boat for a while. When he returned, he brought with him three or four large gourds. Placing these in the bottom of the boat, he drew a knife, and then, selecting the largest, made a sort of helmet of it. While engaged in doing this he threw the other gourds over at intervals.

Finally, when the helmet was complete, he told Ted, who had been lying in the bottom of the boat watching him with great interest, to put on the gourd, jump overboard, and drop quietly down stream in the wake of the boat. The other gourds had been thrown in by the crafty fellow to disarm suspicion.

Ted did not feel very anxious for a bath in that cold and uninviting fluid, but there was no choice for it, so over he went. A rope flung over the stern helped him along, and by and by a turn of the stream brought them under the fort of Ungawallah. Here the native signed to Ted to swim ashore.

"The sentry will come round soon," he whispered, bending over the stern, "and you must shout to him and they'll let down the rope. But you must be very careful. The sepoys have boats below."

Ted swam ashore, and hiding himself among the rough stones at the foot of the rock, kept a keen eye on the fort, watching for the sentry. It was late and dusk, and Ted felt the cold after his bath. He waited for a long time, but no sentry passed on the rampart above.

"Had the native been deceiving him?" he wondered. But the truth was, after their hard day's fighting the little garrison were resting, and this side of the fort, which was supposed to be inaccessible, was less carefully guarded than usual.

At last Ted's patience gave way. It was too dark for any one to see him from the opposite shore, and he could spy a light at a window in the lower part of the fort. He would try to scale the rock.

It was dangerous and difficult work at first, for he was stiff and numbed with cold. But he struggled on and crawled up foot by foot. The darkness was rather in his favor, for it prevented his seeing the terrors of the ascent. So, still he toiled up, — now resting for a while, with extended arms grasping some wide boss of stone, — now crawling on all-fours along a narrow ledge, — now hanging from some projecting spur. By the time he had got half-way up to the window, he was almost inclined to wish he had stayed below. But it was as far to go back as to go on now, and more dangerous, so he persevered.

His clothes were almost torn off his back, his hands were bleeding, and his feet were cut (he had flung off his boots before he jumped into the river), and every limb was weary and bruised. But at length he managed to get his hands on the sill of the little window and drew himself up.

"By Jove!" was his exclamation on looking in. It was heard by those inside, and apparently was mistaken for some hostile sound, for the next thing Ted had to say was, "Don't fire, Tom; it's I, Edward Harding."

Tom could hardly believe his ears, but he sprang to the window, flung it open, and half helped, half dragged his friend in.

"Where on earth do you drop from, Ted?" was all he could find power to say.

"I have n't dropped from anywhere. I climbed up from below. And the 203d is marching down to your relief and will be here before daybreak!"

"Hurrah!" shouted Tom, — "hurrah!" and he rushed out and shouted "Hurrah!" so vigorously that everybody came hurrying to learn what was the matter; and when they heard they shouted "Hurrah!" too. The besiegers knew what "Hurrah!"

meant well enough, but could n't for the life of them make out what the garrison could have to rejoice about.

And all this time the gallant 203d was pushing on to Ungawallah for life and death!

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE BATTLE OF BREMNING MINOR.

"Good morning, Mrs. Harding," said Philip, entering at the parsonage-gate just as Prue was coming out, — "good morning. You are astir early. Some errand of charity, I presume?"

"If early rising be due to charitable motives, may I ask on what mission of mercy Mr. Philip Charlwood is cut at eight in the morning?"

"I am going on a mission the birds will consider anything but one of mercy. I want a brace or two to send to a friend in town."

"But can't you put it off till later? — I'm afraid you will wake baby out of her nap after breakfast."

Philip was puzzled.

"I don't quite understand. Wake baby!"

"Yes," said Prue, innocently. "I met you coming into our garden, and when you said you were after some birds I supposed they were on our lawn."

"Ha! ha! now you're poking fun, I'm afraid, as the Yankees say. The truth is, that as I was passing the gate on my way to the keeper's I saw you coming down the lawn, and just stepped in to bid you good morning."

"Dear, that was very kind of you. But how tall you must be to see over our gate!"

"O, there was no necessity for my seeing over it, — I could see through it, you know."

"Ah, I forgot you lawyers are educated to see through things. But I did think that inch-thick oak-plank might have defied the eye of the law."

"I suppose it is a gimblet-eye which no timber can resist."

"O, you don't mean that you have been boring holes in our gate!"

"No, not for worlds," — and here Philip could n't help giving a return thrust, — "not for worlds, though spying is one of the pleasant customs of this little Eden."

"Ah, you see, all country places abound in curiosity and scandal."

"Heaven defend me from living in the country!"

"O, why? Honest, respectable people don't mind the prying of their neighbors.

You surely can't prefer London to this delightful village? — in fact, I won't hear even you so misreported even by yourself, for you seem to find it almost impossible to tear yourself away from Bremning."

"Well, you see, a fellow must have a little regard for domestic ties. But I assure you I don't like the country, it is so uncomfortable and unpunctual."

"Dear! what a pity you came down here!"

"That regret sounded very sincere, Mrs. Harding."

"Did it? Ah, well, I can sympathize with people who have unpleasant duties, as I suppose I can appreciate your discomfort here."

"It is very good of you. I am sure I am much obliged for the interest you kindly take in me. I feel I have done nothing to deserve it."

"The relation in which I stand to your sister," said Prue, sharply and distinctly, "should explain the interest I take in her brother."

"Ah, to be sure, — yes, you and she are great friends, I believe, and it is really very kind of you, because she is so very young and silly. I am sure she ought to be grateful to you."

"I don't wish that, Mr. Charlwood. I wish I could influence one so young and — and inexperienced, so as to prevent her being imposed on or deceived."

"In what way?" asked Philip, coldly.

"By a man, Mr. Philip Charlwood, who does not love her, and who, if he had a spark of honor, would not try the faith of a girl affianced to one who is absent."

"O, is *that* the imposition? I thought you were alluding to Mr. Edward Harding. He has not been heard of, by the way, has he, since he left England?"

"You are speaking of my brother-in-law, sir," said Prue, haughtily.

"Yes, but not of mine, I hope."

There had been some pretty fencing up to this point with only just the least little bit of temper in the exchanges. But now the swords were out in real earnest, and the foils were flung aside.

"You have tried to obtain your hope by all means, fair or foul, Mr. Philip Charlwood. Mr. Edward Harding is a man of honor, I should be sorry to see him the brother-in-law of any one who has not the same claim to the title of gentleman."

"I am delighted to hear your unprejudiced opinion of Mr. Harding's honor. I presume you do not consider a man's claim to that title injured supposing he has to leave Oxford on account of debt."

"Certainly not, if he pays his debts. Mr. Edward Harding does not owe a shilling at Oxford."

Philip was compelled to own to himself that this was a "hit, — a palpable hit," — but he returned to the attack.

"And what do you think of a poor man who wins the heart of a rich but inexperienced girl surreptitiously?"

"Mr. Philip Charlwood, you are uttering what is false, and what you know to be false," said Prue, confronting Philip with flashing eyes. She owed to James afterwards that she had for a brief second wished herself a man that she might strike Edward's belier then and there. "It is false, Mr. Philip Charlwood. Edward Harding wooed your sister openly and honestly, and went to your father in an upright and straightforward manner. How your father treated him I need not say; you know, and I dare say approve of it."

"I do not approve of a father bestowing a daughter who will be rich some day on the first penniless man who comes to ask for her."

"Edward Harding is not a penniless man, Mr. Charlwood; he is a gentleman serving his queen and country in the field, — not living at ease on the proceeds of chicanery and quibbling; and let me tell you also, Mr. Charlwood, that your family might consider itself honored by an alliance with the Hardings. My family was as wealthy as yours, sir, but it has reason to be proud of my marrying a Harding."

"Ah, your uncle does n't think so, though."

That hit must score to Philip. He had been a little overmatched hitherto, for Prue had the right on her side, but now she had laid herself open to the retort which long experience at the bar enabled Philip to turn upon her with.

"That is no business of yours, sir," was all Prue could reply, and that was rude, and nothing more.

"Ah, Mrs. Harding, if we would but all of us attend to our own business! If you, for instance, would not take so untiring an interest in my sister's movements —"

"Stop, Mr. Charlwood! When Edward Harding went away, — when your father had turned your sister out of doors, and she sought the protection of our roof, her affianced lover gave her to me as a sacred charge, — as sacred as a charge received at a death-bed, for who knows whether he may return? I consider that I have a right to watch over her with a sisterly, almost motherly affection. I have as much right as yourself."

"Pshaw, Mrs. Harding! you know this is sentimental nonsense. Let us talk like sensible people. That silly girl plighted her troth to Mr. Harding when she did not know her own mind. He, apparently, has forgotten all about her —"

"How dare you say that?"

"My dear madam, we may as well discuss this quietly. Pray be patient. I was going to say that he has apparently forgotten all about her, for she has received not a line from him since they parted."

"I am not sure that Edward Harding would write, for he might have known Mr. Charlwood would not scruple to open his letters; but, leaving that out of the question, we have not heard from him because the first mail after his arrival in India was lost in the Red Sea, and he was probably ordered off at once into the disturbed districts, where, if he had time to write, he would not have the opportunity of posting."

"You should have been a special pleader, Mrs. Harding."

"If that is intended for a compliment, sir, I must beg to decline it. I consider a paid advocate must sacrifice conscience and principles to his profession. I am no paid advocate, — I simply speak the truth."

"Surely you do not suppose I have received a retainer from my father in the case of Charlwood v. Harding?"

"I really can't tell, Mr. Charlwood, any more than I can guess your retainer — I think that was what you called it — in the case of Lysaght v. Harding; but, whatever it is, and however large the reward, you have certainly more than earned it. You have conducted the case with consummate skill from the beginning, and there is nothing that you have not sacrificed for it."

Philip smiled. He could n't help smiling, for he felt it was true that he had conducted his case with excellent tact and judgment. Prue saw the smile, and hated him for it.

"O, I know what your smile means now, Mr. Charlwood. I ought to have understood it the first day you came here, with professions of friendship and a pretence of peacemaking. I hated you then, — I know why I hated you now."

Philip bowed.

"You do me too much honor, under the circumstances, to speak to me. Good morning."

"Stop, Mr. Charlwood; you were coming to see Mr. Harding, I presume, when I met you —"

"O dear, no! It was for the pleasure of seeing you."

"Me?"

"Yes, entirely. I guessed you would be going out for a stroll, and as two young people in whom I take an interest were going out for a walk, and one of them has not much more stay to make here, I was desirous of prevailing on you to let them alone for once."

"Coward!" said little Prue, growing crimson with anger.

She felt he had outwitted her, and in a most unworthy way, and she was angry with both herself and him.

There was a little pause. Philip felt he had gone a little too far, and was silent. Prue was too angry to speak.

At last she found words. With an enforced calm she pointed to the gate, and said quietly, but with great intensity, —

"Mr. Philip Charlwood, there lies the gate of the parsonage, inside which I never wish to see you again."

"Your wishes in this case are commands, madam. But as you forbid me the house, perhaps you will convey to Mr. Harding the intelligence which I intended to bring to him this afternoon."

"I will convey any message to him."

"Will you tell him that I greatly regret that all the eloquence and arguments of a 'paid advocate' have failed to induce my father to restore the chaplain's salary of which he felt it his duty to deprive him?"

"I never expected Mr. Charlwood to restore that, — any more than I should expect Mr. Philip Charlwood to advise its restoration."

"O, I'm very averse from my father's retaining it, and so, you see, I've proposed that he shall start a chaplain, and as I occasionally read prayers to the servants, I think of drawing the salary myself. In fact, my father has promised it to me in the event of its not returning to Mr. Harding. Pray, present my compliments to him, — I wish you a very good morning."

He took off his hat, and Prue bowed very low in return.

"I wish you good morning, sir. I am glad to hear that prayers are occasionally read at the Manor-house. I have half feared from the practices of its inhabitants that no Christian observances were kept up."

"Thank you," Philip retorted, as he closed the gate, "we have not been very regular always, but now that I am to be *paid*, I've no doubt I shall feel as earnest as a real clergyman. Good day!"

With that he strode off, rather delighted than otherwise at his little encounter. It was to him what putting on the gloves with a clever amateur is to a practised boxer. It

was pleasant exercise which more than repaid the pain of a chance tap or two.

"Egad, she's a plucky little woman. Ought to have been a man and at the bar, — she hits out straight from the shoulder. Gave me a nasty one or two. But I think she will feel the punishment most. And now for these birds I told her of at first to keep her quiet. I know where to find the brace." So saying, Philip walked briskly off in the direction which Marcus and Bella had taken when he dropped in to intercept Prue.

Poor Prue did feel the punishment. When the excitement was over, she kept recalling some of Philip's cruel taunts, and it ended in her going up stairs and taking Prue the second, who was her confidante in all troubles, in her lap, and crying very hard for some time, to the wondering distress of Martha Ogleby, who was firmly convinced that some of the things must have gone wrong in the wash, — such losses being connected in her mind with the spectacle of her mother weeping because "them dratted tramps had been stealing again, — how ever the squire's cambric handkerchers was to be replaced she could n't tell." Martha viewed the world from two stand-points, — one was baby, and the other was washing, — and whatever she did not perceive through the one or the other of these mediums she looked upon with a stolid wonder and bewilderment that made her a very difficult subject to deal with. Washing she had been born to, — baby was the only acquired taste she had, and she referred everything in the world to these two prime causes. So in this case, as she knew baby was quite well and very good, being, in fact, asleep, she fell back on the linen, and, supposing Prue's grief was due to some error about the number of things that had gone and the number of things that had come back from the wash, started off to the linen-cupboard in the spare room and went over the whole of the basket, comparing the articles with the items in the bill.

So Prue had the nursery to herself, where she was by and by discovered by her husband, still sobbing over baby. He was, of course, surprised at her sorrow, and asked its cause, and so with a few tears and gulps the little champion went over her fight with Philip.

James looked very grave here and there, but he felt that Philip had been attacked first, and that Prue had, to the best of her power, given as good as she took. So he felt he could not quarrel with Charlwood for standing on the defensive.

As for the loss of the two hundred a year,

it was a loss, he owned, especially with Prue the second and her future to be taken into consideration, but he must do as best he could. He wished the parish were in better order, so that he could take pupils without feeling he was neglecting his duty.

With regard to Bella, he could only repeat what he had said before, — that she was unworthy of Ted, that the family would be anything but a desirable connection, and that Edward would probably survive this disappointment as he had another.

But Prue was not so easily satisfied. Whether Bella was worthy or not, she had been left in her care, and she was bound to cling to her charge to the last.

"I remember Edward said about the Balaklava charge that, though it was utterly useless and purposeless, it was the duty of the men to charge when they had the orders. I have orders to guard Bella, and, let her be worth whatever she may, I must fight for her till the last!"

"You're a courageous little woman, Prue; but you owe me a duty, too, which is, not to kill yourself with worry."

"Never fear, James," said the little woman, smiling up at him through her tears.

"Please'm," said Martha Ogleby, entering radiant, "I've a-counted 'em, and there ain't none missin', — on'y one o' the young Miss Chalood's hanshykers come home instead o' yourn."

"It's quite right, Martha, I dare say. I had n't counted them."

"Aw!" said Martha, and collapsed.

She knew it was not baby, and now she had learnt it was not the linen. Both these explanations failing, there was only one other alternative open to Martha, — "Tis n't Miss Prue, and tis n't the clothes, — well, then it's somethin'." And somethin' not being either of the first two alternatives was in reality nothing to Martha, who relapsed into her old calm puzzle as to what the world, with the exception of baby and the washing, could possibly be, what it was meant for, and why it went on as it did.

How many of my lady readers, especially in the present dearth of good servants, must be longing to engage this domestic treasure!

Meanwhile Mr. Philip, piping a lively whistle, stepped out gayly along the road where he expected to meet Marcus and Bella. He had brought his friend to the point a few days before by hinting that when he wished him to flirt with Bella he did not expect he would carry the game so far and make love so desperately. Marcus had of his own free will been thinking that he had made a conquest of Bella, and cal-

culating how much old C. would give her, and whether she would not look very charming as the Countess of Mountgarret, so that this very mild expostulation of his friend's settled the question.

"My dear boy, I should not have ventured to trifle with her affection in such a manner. The fact is, you see, that I really entertain a deep passion for her — a love that I should have ere this asked her seriously to allow and return, if that confounded little she-parson had given me a fair chance."

"My dear Marcus, I am indeed delighted. By Jove! the dream of my life, — that my most intimate friend should marry my sister." (And then he said to himself, "That two hundred is potted.") "Marcus, shake hands. I congratulate you and myself, — I know she loves you, — and as for that Mrs. Harding, I'll get her out of the way."

"A thousand thanks, Philip. But how and when?"

"When? to-morrow morning. How? leave that to me!"

So it was agreed that the following morning Marcus should take Bella out for a walk to a romantic little plantation where there was a picturesque water-mill and a small lake (it was a pond actually), — a scene of which Bella was very fond, because it reminded her of so many novels, — and that then and there he should declare his love.

When Philip reached the stile leading into the plantation he paused.

"Better not go any farther. I might just drop in on them as he was popping the question."

So he sat down on the stile, lit a cigar, and made a mental inventory of the luxuries on which he would expend his extra two hundred a year.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A RACE FOR LIFE.

VERY earnestly and impatiently did the little garrison of Ungawallah wait for the dawn. Every man was under arms, and all fretted for the time to come when they might sally out and attack their besiegers.

It was impossible altogether to overlook the fact that the sepoys considerably outnumbered the 203d. But they would be taken by surprise and so attacked at an advantage, and, with the little garrison to take them in the rear, would be in but a poor plight.

Of late, since the blowing up of the powder-wagons, there had been better watch

kept on the fort by the mutineers, but they were so secure, they thought, from attack from without, that they did not post sentries, except towards the fortress.

The gray dawn broke rapidly, and the stars went in rapidly, for there is little twilight in those climes. It had been a long watch for morning, but not a man had nodded for one instant, lest perchance he should lose a second's start in the race to meet the foe.

Everything sounded very distinctly to the eager, listening ears in Ungawallah fortress. The stamp of the steed, the rattle of his halter-chain, the tramp of the patrol, and the noise of his accoutrements came clearly on the wind. And as the day lightened and broadened they heard the regular tread of a large body of men, and trembled lest they should wake the foe. But the foe were not listening for it as they were. And so the Berkshire Rifles came on the scene.

There was a ringing cheer.

Then came the shrieks of the terrified sepoy, turning out of their tents half awake to meet the avenging steel, as our gallant fellows rushed on in a race to be the first at the enemy.

Out poured the garrison with a fierce shout, and fell on the mutineers in the rear. They struck with a will, and when they fired they brought down their men, for they had a score to clear off, and would not waste a single shot at random.

The fight was not a long one. The slaughter was great. The 203d attacked the sepoy camp about the centre, having come up under shelter of a tamarind grove, which at this point ran close to the lines. The mutineers at the two extremes of the camp got under arms with all haste, and hastened to support their fellows, but the sally of the garrison alarmed them. They were ignorant of the numbers of the enemy, and supposed they were surrounded, for they believed it impossible that the garrison could be acting in concert with the reliefs, — how could they have been communicated with? After a brief halt, in which their leaders tried to rally them, they fairly broke and fled. The Rifles were too tired with their forced march to pursue them far, and the garrison was too small for the purpose, not to mention that it, too, was wearied out with watching and fighting.

But the 203d followed the fugitives to a brow of the slope, beyond which spread by the banks of the river long levels of rice-ground, and thence fired after the flying wretches volley after volley as long as they were in range.

Then came the rest from marching and

fighting, and the meeting of the rescuers and the rescued. They had been too much occupied to take much notice of each other till then.

The little garrison was rapturous in its gratitude. There was such a collation got up immediately for the 203d on the spot, the ladies setting out all sorts of provisions, and waiting on their deliverers with merry alacrity; and the brave fellows, who had found a fine appetite on their march, did justice to the entertainment. That night the 203d encamped — in the tents of the departed sepoy — in front of the fort, which was not large enough to accommodate them.

The next morning a council of war was held. The 203d was bound to push on to effect a junction with the reliefs marching on Lucknow. The little garrison could not be left at Ungawallah, and yet there were no means of transport for the women and children, for the sepoy had gone off with all the horses, with the exception of those which on the night of the mutiny were ridden by the officers. What was to be done!

The commanding officer of the Berkshire Rifles offered to leave a company — or even two — at the fort, and march on with the rest to join the main body, which, after relieving Lucknow, might despatch a force to Ungawallah to convey the garrison to a place of safety.

But those who had been imprisoned so long in the fort were most unwilling to undertake a further captivity of their own accord. They would undergo any hardships rather than that, — the ladies especially declaring they would rather march afoot with the 203d than submit to another day's stay in the fort. And no wonder! The enemy had so nearly succeeded in the attempt to drive a mine that the fort did not appear at all a safe place. The gleaming bayonets of the gallant 203d were a better protection than the frowning walls of Ungawallah.

It was quite plain, however, that, willing as they might be, the ladies were incapable of facing the fatigues of the march. It was not easy to devise any plan for their transportation, but stop in the fort they could not and would not.

Fortunately, while they were in dire perplexity on this point, Ted remembered that something had been said by the native who brought him to Ungawallah about there being boats in the possession of the mutineers. Search was made, and three small boats and a couple of flats, which had been used in conveying provender, were found in a creek a little below the fort. Here was an unexpected means of escape. The boats

were launched and brought up to a convenient landing-place, where they were inspected and leaks looked for and stopped. It was agreed that, as there were no sweeps discoverable in the flats, they should be towed by two of the smaller boats. If they could only get to Kholaghur, which was now in the possession of a regiment of infantry and a detachment of artillery, they would be safe. Kholaghur had been abandoned by the mutineers after a massacre of the whites, but was occupied by a large force *en route* for Lucknow. The heavy artillery, having been found to retard seriously the advance of the relief, was left here with one regiment of foot, and was in a strongly intrenched position.

A company of the 203d was to be left to form an escort and to man the boats; the women, children, wounded, and invalids were to be put on board the flats. The third small boat was also to be manned, and to act as a sort of tender to assist in towing where there were rapids, or to render aid if any boat ran aground.

Finally, it was determined that the fortress of Ungawallah should be blown up. It had originally been a native fort, and before the days of gunpowder must have been almost impregnable. But the near success of the mutineers in undermining it betrayed its weakness, and it was therefore agreed that it should be blown up.

At his special request, Edward Harding was left behind with the company. He was appointed to steer the boat which was to act as tender, Tom Martindale taking the rudder in the first, and Tom Friston in the second, of the towing boats.

It was agreed that the river expedition should start late at night, and that the regiment should march on the following morning, after firing a train which should blow up the magazine of the fort. Although they were so glad to escape from it, and so loath to prolong their stay there, the little garrison could not find it in their hearts to overthrow the walls that had sheltered them from the savage foe. But, besides this, it was thought as well that the fugitives should have got a fair start ere the noise of the explosion alarmed the villages in the immediate neighborhood. It was more than possible that the sepoys might have rallied in considerable numbers in some such places in the vicinity, and the women and children should be placed in comparative safety before the bellow of the explosion, the tremor of the earth, and the great column of smoke should tell the lurking foe that Ungawallah was no more.

Late at night, when the moon shed its

glittering light on the turbulent flood and showered its glimmering touches of silver upon the trees and rocks above the river, — when all was silent save for the wash of the waters, the moan of a night-bird, or the cry of the jackal, — the boats put off, and their occupants waved a silent adieu to the group of officers and men of the 203d that had gathered to see them off.

As Edward was stepping into his boat the surgeon of his regiment came up to him.

"Look here, Harding," said he, "there are several children in arms in those boats, and the exposure to the night air, and the worry and anxiety their mothers have undergone lately, may make them peevish. But their crying might lead the enemy to you, so I've put some quieting compounds in this bottle, — a sort of Daffy, you know, — a drop or two of which will quiet them. I meant to give it to one of the ladies, but as you have a roving commission, it will be more handy with you, after all, perhaps. I have had some lint and bandages and a composing draught or two put on board the second boat, which contains the sick and wounded. I wish you a safe voyage! Good by!"

Edward stepped into his boat and pushed off. All the oars had been carefully muffled, so that there was very little noise. He ordered his men to pull gently up stream alongside the flats, which were waiting for his signal to start. He inquired in each boat if all was right and everybody safely aboard, and then, having made sure of this, gave the word to his crew to give way and get ahead a bit. Then he gave a low whistle, — the men in the towing boats bent over their oars, and then the towing-lines grew taut, and the flats began to toil up stream. They were off!

The river was swollen with recent rains, and flowed with great force, sweeping at times round a bend with such impetuosity that Edward's boat had on several occasions to lend a hand at the tow-rope. It was terribly tedious work, as towing always is, but it seemed more than ordinarily slow to the fugitives. They made such small progress that some of those who longed to put as much distance as possible between them and the scene of their dangers grew weary of watching how long they were in passing objects on the shore.

Thus they rowed steadily on until dawn, when fortunately they found themselves entering a jungle. It had been a question of doubt among them whether it would be better to lie to and try to conceal themselves by day, or to press on at all risks. The jungle, which ran along the course of the

river on both sides, allowed them still to press on, while it concealed them from observation.

It was very difficult work to thread the river, which was here and there divided into separate channels by islets or rocks. It then became Edward's duty to find out which channel was navigable. The search often occupied some time. In one or two cases the water in the best channel was so shallow that they had to get out and push the boats over them. But they worked away with stern and silent determination.

"By Jove! Tom," whispered Edward, as they succeeded, after immense exertion, in getting the boats over one of the worst shallows, "if the beggars are in possession of any forts, or indeed any position, along the river, we must run the gantlet, for we can't come back. We should get aground, and be murdered at their leisure."

"You're right, Ted; and yet we can hardly expect the river to deepen as we go higher, so that our chances are poor ones, any way. Does any one know whether there's a fort between here and Kholaghur?"

Edward did not know, but he would inquire. There was little hope of finding any one acquainted with the country, but he questioned all. Luckily, the civil engineer, who had been inspector of the defences at Ungawallah, had some years since resided at Kholaghur. While there he had been employed by a speculative nabob, who thought he could grow cotton in the neighborhood, to survey the stream with a view to canalization. He reported that to the best of his recollection there were no forts, or even villages, between Kholaghur and Ungawallah; but there was, a few miles above the jungle, a large overhanging rock, on which were the ruins of a native fortification, reputed to have been the stronghold of a tribe of robbers.

The robbers were swept away some years ago, but he feared their position might be occupied — if the sepoys knew of the route they were going to take — and would give the enemy such an immense advantage that all the crews of the boats could be shot down without a chance of defending themselves or retaliating.

Edward went back to Tom, and told him what the engineer said.

"Take him into your boat, Ted, and let him report how far we are from the rock. We must take a rest before we come there. My fellows, in spite of relieving each other every hour or so, are getting knocked up."

"We had better halt at the end of the jungle, and serve out rations; then look to

our arms, pull on quietly till we get in sight of the bluff, and then let go for dear life."

"Go and fetch the engineer, Ted, and then we'll arrange plans."

Edward pulled back and took the engineer on board.

"Well, Mr. Martyn," said Tom, when the boats were alongside again, "how's the river there?"

"Pretty broad, and quite deep enough for boats of our draught."

"Which side is the bluff?"

"The one I chiefly refer to is on our right; but on the opposite bank is an answering eminence, not so high, if I remember right, but so densely wooded as to afford ample cover to sharpshooters."

"Is the ascent of the bluff from the land side difficult?"

"I should say not, for it is covered with a grove of trees, and is, as far as I can recall, a gentle slope."

"We must have a forlorn hope, gentlemen," said Tom. "A few of us must be put ashore a little before we come to the bluff, and must make a rush up it and try to distract their attention while the boats get by."

"Let us hope the precaution won't be needed," said one of the civilians in Tom's boat; "but I'm ready to go, for one."

"We must have soldiers, I'm afraid," said Tom. "Sorry to disappoint you; but, you see, a handful of discipline in a case like this is better than oceans of pluck."

"Well, I suppose you'll let me go as 'a little one in,' if I want?" said the other.

"No; you must stop and help along the boats."

"Well, I'll obey orders," said the civilian.

"The forlorn hope had better land in this boat and haul it up. In case the bluff is not occupied they can return, launch it, and soon catch us up," suggested Edward.

"Each boat must trust to itself and look after itself, for you must try and carry off the women, — not stop to fight."

"Better to lose a few than all, — there would be no time for rescue."

"We are getting near the end of the jungle," said Mr. Martyn, the engineer; "a few strokes round that point will bring us in sight of the bluff."

"Easy all!" said Tom, "pull for shore."

The boats rowed to the bank, and their occupants landed. Rations were then served out, and the weary oarsmen stretched their tired limbs on the sward and snatched a few minutes' rest.

"Mr. Martyn," said Tom, drawing the engineer a little apart from the spot where the terrified women — terrified, yet quite

unconscious of the new danger immediately impending—were sitting. "Mr. Martyn, do you think I can get anywhere near the place without fear of discovery?"

"Yes, the banks are wooded on both sides."

"A good idea; I can wade along close in shore and reconnoitre. Tell Harding where I've gone."

Tom was gone about an hour, and came back with bad tidings. He had got as far as a bend of the stream whence he could see two or three sepoys posted on the bank. He could not tell how many there were on the bluff, but it was evident that preparations had been made to cut them off.

There was no use trying to conceal the danger longer. It was equally useless to think of turning back. So they called the little party together and told them of the dire peril before them. Tom had carefully reconnoitred, and he recommended that the forlorn hope should land at the bend where he had stopped and push on to the knoll, the boats waiting for five minutes, and then starting at racing pace. It was to be clearly understood that each boat with its attendant flat must look after its own interests. There must be no pause to help the others, for such a delay would involve all in the slaughter.

Then came the volunteering for the forlorn hope. Tom explained that it must consist entirely of soldiers. Every soldier was ready to volunteer for the desperate duty, so at last it was determined that they should cast lots. And a lot fell on Tom Martindale, but Edward Harding was not of the number.

Next they cast lots who should be in the first boat, and Edward Harding's place was to be there, but Mary was to go in the second boat.

Edward tried hard to persuade Tom to change places with him, but Tom would not listen to him. If they, the principal leaders of the little expedition, vacillated, what could they expect of the men?

"Take care of Mary as far as you can, Ted. Good by. God bless you, old fellow! Save my poor child if you can!" They wrung each other's hands warmly.

And then followed the parting of Tom from his wife and child, which I dare not attempt to describe.

Last of all the little boat with the forlorn hope put off, keeping well under the bank. The two other boats with the flats in tow got out into mid-stream, the men bending over their oars, waiting for the signal to start. Tom Friston steered the first boat, Mr. Martyn the second. Edward Harding

stood in the bows of Friston's boat, watch in hand, waiting to give the word as quietly as if he had been holding the bung for a college race on old Isis.

"Are you ready?"

"Ready."

"Off!"—and away they went.

CHAPTER XXX.

NOT OFF WITH THE OLD LOVE, BUT ON WITH THE NEW.

BELLA CHARLWOOD had selected a most romantic spot for the scene of the proposal. It was just the place to suit so very sentimental a young lady.

Vale Farm—in reality it was only a water-mill—was situated at the foot of a wooded slope. About half-way up the hillside there was a spring issuing from a cave, locally reported to have been the haunt of a highwayman. A narrow channel conducted the stream to a good-sized pool, originally, perhaps, an artificial reservoir, but now so neglected as to appear a natural lake of small dimensions. Thence the water was conveyed for a few yards under ground in iron pipes, which then, supported on two ivy-covered stone piers, carried it over a plashy, brier-grown hollow to turn the huge wheel of the mill. Having performed its task, the emancipated brooklet boiled out below the mill and flowed away across the meadows in the plain below, where its course might be traced by the pollard-willows along its banks, until it joined the distant river.

It was a very pretty scene, with plenty of charming bits for an artist's pencil. There was the dark chasm whence the brook sprang, with plumes of hartstongue waving above it, with trails of ivy or sprays of dog-rose and blackberry looped across it, with a young sapling spiring up slender and green from a ledge where the wind had carried a stray seed. Above the arch ran the road which meandered down to the mill,—a road with a south aspect, so that the bank beyond it, overgrown with privet and whitethorn, was a rare basking-ground for the choicest butterflies, which fluttered up in crowds when you passed. Above this was a belt of pines and firs, their sombre greenery clear cut against the sky, while the sunlight glowed brightly on their red and silvery stems.

Sparkling and prattling as it issued from its dark prison in the hillside, the brook hastened on to the pool, refreshing the herbage on its banks with such clear cool

sprinklings of dew that a brighter emerald graced the feathery fern-fronds; while the spires of foxgloves towered higher and the snowy flowers of the bramble bloomed more thickly where they bent over the little thread of water.

The pool was a deep, quiet, calm mirror, reflecting the gray boles of the beeches and the graceful foliage of the horse-chestnuts that hung over it, and giving back with increased intensity the blue of the clear sky above all.

The stream was reputed to be a petrifying spring, — and, indeed, it deposited on the huge wheel such flakes of hard lime that it seemed to turn it into stone, — so that, if you struck it, it did not give back the dull sound of wood, but the sharp, almost metallic ring of stone. Whether it was the peculiarity of the water, or some peculiar species of weed growing in it, that gave the pool its strange color, I know not, but there was a vivid blue-green about its depths that reminded one of a scene-painter's idea of the bottom of the sea, rather than of nature. It would hardly have surprised one had the wine-dark gloom dissipated to reveal below the water-nymphs sporting, or some river-god asleep upon his urn. Beyond the pool was an orchard filled with quaint masses of rock (a soft, crumbling rock, identical in character with the lime deposit of the stream), which gave a weird, strange look to the place.

But for a few trifling things, — such as the busy hum of the waterwheel, the presence of some articles of dab-wash on the hedges, and the smell of cooking (wafted from the mill chimney, which was on a level with the pool, so abrupt was the descent to the wheel), — trifling things that spoke plainly of modern times and civilization, you might have imagined the orchard, pool, and cave the haunt of some wicked magician or ogre. Those fantastic rocks were the knights who, failing to overthrow the wicked one, were by him changed into stone. That cave is the entrance-hall of his vast palace; if you peer into the gloom you may almost fancy you see the usual horn suspended beside the gate. That mysterious pool is the prison in which he conceals the princess to rescue whom so many knights have fought and failed.

No wonder, then, if your proxy novelist is so carried away by the romance of the spot, that Bella should be so much attached to it.

Hither, then, she led Marcus Lysaght early on the morning of the day of the battle of Bremning Minor.

It was a beautiful morning. The long,

blue shadows stretched far across the grass, over which now and then flitted little patches of shade cast by the flying fleeces overhead. The trees were touched, as with a loving hand, with the melancholy glories of autumn. A little tinge of melancholy is needed to make anything exquisitely enjoyable; the small, black speck in a rosy apple heightens the beauty of the color, and hints that it is perishable. And this perishableness makes it the more dear to us, for we weary of and do not value — we poor perishable creatures — that which is everlasting and unchangeable. Our nature cannot grasp it. And so the golden and russet, the crimson and purple, glories of autumn make the season very dear to us all.

It had not been too dry an autumn, and the fields were green and velvety in the early dawn, glittering with dewdrops, and sprinkled with daisies. The larks were aloft twinkling against the sky, and there was a hum and stir — a sort of praise-giving murmur — in the air, as Marcus and Bella passed over the Lea on their way to Vale Farm. There was a wishing-well on the Lea, where a tiny thread of water trilled into a mossy stone basin. Of course Bella could not resist the temptation of going and drinking some of the mystic spring, and breathing a wish over it. Marcus readily fell in with the idea, and they each took a draught in the hollow of their hand, in accordance with the superstitious regulations of the spot.

Marcus had won a great advantage over Edward Harding by the readiness with which he humored Bella's romantic vagaries. To her he appeared to approve of and share in all her sentimental notions, but the truth was he only humored them, whereas Ted — who was, in his own way, romantic enough himself, more so than Marcus — had rather snubbed some of her choice follies. Marcus Lysaght was more of a man of the world than Ted, whose experience of life was won in no wider field than the university, while Marcus had from his youth moved much in fashionable life. A capital dancer, and much in request at balls and parties of every description, Marcus had learnt how to make himself agreeable.

He knew that in life, as at a ball, you are constantly changing partners and *vis-à-vis*. You are introduced to a young lady to dance one set of quadrilles with her, and then probably never to meet her again. It is therefore wise to learn a method by which to put yourself on an easy footing with one with whom your acquaintance is fated to be so short, but on whom you wish

to leave a favorable impression, or at any rate not to leave an unfavorable one. Marcus's secret was simple enough. He endeavored to find out as briefly as possible the particular tastes of the lady he danced with, and, having done so, to identify himself with them.

In this way he charmed Miss Chasuble by talking High Church, Miss Serious by his evangelical proclivities, Miss Ranter, by his admiration of Spurgeon, Miss Canter, by his opinion of Cumming. He talked Toryism with the Hon. Miss Evelyn Trueblue, daughter of the Earl of Highandry, and rabid Radicalism with Miss Jenny, daughter of Mr. Staple, the cotton-spinner. He was poetical with Miss Flighty, historical with Miss Crammer, philanthropical with Miss Misshins, and absurd with Miss Giggie. He was enabled to do this effectively. It did not require any great depth of reading to keep a little ahead of each lady in her particular walk, and his memory was a good one.

From this training, therefore, he was quite prepared to go with Bella in her admiration of romance. He did, indeed, read a great many novels himself, always knocking off a chapter or two with his cigar after breakfast; but he read them as a sort of counter-irritant to his law studies. The law books were full of information, and very heavy; the novels were quite devoid of anything instructive, and very light; and so he took the latter to correct the former.

He and Bella got on admirably. He took the water of the wishing-well with an appearance of faith and fervor which delighted Bella, and no doubt considerably influenced the wish that she uttered internally.

Then they wandered on, and toiled up the winding path to the pool, and sat down in the orchard to rest after their fatigues.

Bella posed herself gracefully upon the slant stem of an apple-tree which formed a sort of natural rustic seat. Marcus flung himself down on the grass at her feet. Then came a pause. Marcus began to single out particularly fine blades of grass, which he picked and ate like a very Nebuchadnezzar, while Bella dibbled little holes in the ground with the point of her parasol.

"You're not tired, I hope?" said Marcus at last, finding the silence was growing oppressive, and feeling it would be better to make a silly remark than none at all.

"O dear, no!" said Bella, gushingly. "I'm such a capital walker, you know. O, I'm used to it, because when we are alone"

(here there came a little sigh) "papa and I wander about together a great deal."

"Indeed!"

"O yes, — very often."

Then came another pause, for somehow that subject was not suggestive of much.

"What a jolly place this is!" said Marcus at last, — "so quaint, and out of the way, and that sort of thing."

"O, a charming spot! — so romantic, so beautiful, so poetical! It always reminds me of a beautiful poem about — dear me, what is it? Something about, 'Go on, cold rivulet, to the sea.' I think it is Tennyson's or Tupper's, — I forget which. But don't you love poetry?"

"Very much indeed. I envy the fellows who can write it immensely. I remember that song very well, too; in fact, I know the air. But it makes me quite sad to think of it."

"Indeed! O, tell me what romantic interest has it for you? What touches you when you think of it? Pray tell me!"

"Well, you see, there something about —

'No more by these my steps shall stray,
Forever and forever' —

or something of the sort; and, you know, this is most likely my last visit to Vale Farm. Your brother and I are due in town in a few days."

"Heigh-ho! I shall be so sorry."

"Yes; Philip is a very model of attentive and affectionate brothers."

"O, of course I shall miss Philip very much! But —"

"But what, Miss Charwood?"

"Well, he is so often away. You know we have not seen him here for an age. Still, of course, we shall miss him."

"And I'm sure he will be sorry to go. At least, if I may judge of his feelings by my own."

"Yours! O, I'm sure you must be tired of this humdrum country life."

"On the contrary, I am delighted with it. Ah me! I only wish I were some rustic Tityrus reposing under a beech."

"I don't remember him. Is he in *The Romance of the Forest*?"

"No. He was a lucky dog who lived some hundreds of years ago, far apart from the ordinary worries of human life, — or so Virgil says."

The temptation to display his classical knowledge — though he knew Bella would not appreciate it — had betrayed Marcus into a statement which virtually checked the conversation for a few minutes. Another pause ensued, during which he devoured more grass and she prodded the unresisting

earth into a pattern for a cullender. At last the lady took up the talk again, and this time hovered a little nearer the subject they were both aiming at.

"We shall miss you very much when you are gone. Papa, I am sure, will be quite at a loss for an adviser when you have left us."

"And you, Miss Charlwood?"

"O, I shall be quite lonely again. No one to take me out for walks or tell me of the last new novels—nobody—heigh-ho!"

"Miss Charlwood—Bella—I may call you Bella, may I not?" said Marcus, getting up gradually on one knee and leaning against the apple-tree, so as to get his arm in an easy position to clasp Bella's waist when necessary; "you will let me call you Bella?"

"O, such a friend of Philip's, and papa's, and all of us, may call me so, if he likes, you know, Mr. Lysaght."

"Yes, but don't speak to me in that formal way. Call me Marcus."

"O, I could n't!"

"Yes, you could if you tried,—try now!"

"It would sound so odd, so familiar. And you know I—I—O, I could n't!"

"Now do just this once!"

Here the arm crept round imperceptibly.

"Well—Marcus—there! I declare I did n't think I could find the courage."

"Ah, Bella, dearest Bella, if you would but always call me Marcus! If you would but add some endearing term to that poor name! Bella,"—here his voice sank lower and the arm crept closer,— "darling Bella, if you would only bestow on me the love—"

"O, hush! hush!" said Bella. "I must not hear more. You forget I am affianced to another. No, I must not hear a word more!"

And she put her fingers into her ears with a pretty affectation of deafness. But she could hear what he said all the same!

"But, my own dear girl, you will not throw away your heart where you can surely feel no affection. You have been slighted and neglected by this Harding—"

"La! who ever told you about it?" broke in Bella.

Marcus was a little taken by surprise, but he fenced the question artfully, leading Bella to believe that Mrs. Harding had been his informant.

"The nasty, artful thing," thought Bella, "to go and spitefully interfere, just because of a little harmless flirtation!" And Bella determined to avenge herself on Prue and Edward and all the family. She had been neglected by one and betrayed by another of them. So she turned to Marcus with a yielding grace.

"O Marcus, what can I offer you but a broken heart and a withered affection! I believed I loved, and though it is true I was mistaken—"

"No! no! Bella dearest, you were deceived; you have been cruelly entrapped into an engagement where you did not give your heart. That is mine, I feel sure. Say you give it to me!"

"Alas, you will reproach me with that foolish, that fatal attachment."

"Never, dear girl, never! Tell me you will be mine, bestow on me the love which has never been awakened for another,—you only mistook pity or friendship for the affection which the heart can only feel once in a lifetime. Say that you love me!"

"O Marcus!"

He was kneeling close beside her now, with his arm round her waist, and his face so close to hers that her hair brushed his cheek. He raised her hand to his lips, and she did not resist, for she knew from her novel-reading that that was a quite allowable expression of affection.

"Whisper to me at least that you do not hate me, Bella!"

"Hate you? O no!"—and she buried her blushing face on his shoulder,— "I love you but too—too well. But this terrible engagement. I dare not, I must not release myself."

"But you are released. You have been neglected and forgotten: the tie no longer binds you."

"But I dare not—"

"Dare not? And yet you say you love me, Bella! Dare not! Would you dare to continue plighted to one who does not possess your heart?"

"O no, no! But it must not be yet. Do not breathe a word of this to any living soul. I must still bear this terrible engagement a little longer. Let us keep our love a secret from all, and let us trust each other, Marcus. I plight my troth to you, and will be true to you, whatever may happen, and in spite of what others say. But conceal our engagement even from Philip for a while,—until I tell you that I can feel myself released."

"But you are released now!"

"I dare not hope it, fondly as I dream it, Marcus. For suppose he should return and claim me! It has happened, for it did happen to *The Duke's Ward*. And I should have to keep my promise then. But you would still be true to me, and never wed another?"

Marcus thought to himself this was rather a hard bargain, but he only said, "I could not long survive your loss, dearest Bella!"

which so delighted that young lady that I verily believe she wished Edward might come back, it would be so romantic to have any one die for her !

"O no, you would still live and love me in secret, and I should go through life with a broken heart wedded to another ! It must be."

"Well, he may not turn up, after all," said Marcus, gliding unthinkingly into commonplace ; "and even if he does, he would never exact the promise !"

"Let us not think of it, Marcus. We love each other truly, and whether united or divided our love will be the same. But you will not breathe a word of this solemn plighting to any breathing soul."

And Marcus vowed solemnly to breathe a word to no living soul ; and then they exchanged rings and sealed the engagement with a kiss, and gave each other locks of hair, all of which was done according to the rules in such cases made and provided in sentimental novels.

Finally, when all this was over, they sauntered homeward arm in arm, conversing fondly of the past, the present, and the future.

At the gate which led from Vale Farm into the high road they came upon Philip, whose presence indeed they had become aware of some time ere they saw him, by the odor of the choice Cabana he was smoking.

"Well, Bella, so you've shown Marcus your pet bit of picturesque ? It's pretty, isn't it, old boy ?"

"Very lovely indeed," said Marcus.

"Is it all right ?" inquired Philip in dumb-show, falling a little behind and catching his friend's eye.

"All right !" signalled the other, apparently quite forgetful of the solemn vow he had made a minute before to keep their loves a secret.

And the heart of Philip rejoiced.

CHAPTER XXXI.

IN THE MIDST OF PERIL.

WHEN, after a pause of intense anxiety and excitement, Edward Harding, seated in the stern sheets of the first boat, gave the word to start, it seemed a positive relief to the men to dig their oars into the water and lift the boat along with such a vigorous first stroke as made all her timbers groan and creak. Then came a dreadful silence, save for the dash of the oars as they tugged away doggedly, the flats swaying heavily on

the tow-lines and stopping the way sorely. Not a word was spoken in any of the boats, but many of the women were praying as they clasped their children to their hearts.

Presently there was a shout and a shot on the right bank, where the forlorn hope had landed. Edward could distinguish Tom's voice as with a cheer the brave little handful dashed up the slope. The effect was certainly favorable for the fugitives in the boats, for only a dropping fire was maintained from that bank. Unfortunately, the enemy had possession of the other bank, and though not quite to such advantage, the ground being lower, they were still able to pour a devastating fire into the crews as they came abreast of them.

It was a cruelly telling fire ! Within two minutes from the first shot Edward's boat was almost unmanageable. First the bow oar was badly hit ; then three and four were so severely wounded that they could not pull another stroke ; four, being hit in the arm, moreover, let fall his oar and it drifted away.

At such short range the effect was terrific ; but as the men were evidently aiming at the boat's crew, the ladies, though sorely terrified, were not in any actual danger, still the bullets in some instances whistled too close to them to be pleasant, and the children were screaming in alarm, and unnerving their defenders.

And all this while the enemy, firing from behind trees and brushwood, were effectually concealed, and though one or two of the men in the boat fired, it was mere random chance-work. Edward ground his teeth savagely, and wished he were ashore among the wretches, instead of being in a boat running the gantlet in this helpless way. His boat, in spite of all their efforts was drifting ashore, and the rudder no longer guided it. At last a shot severed the tow-line which connected it with the flat, and the boatload of women and children, thus abandoned, floated a few yards down stream and grounded.

Edward had not had time to look round and see how the other boat was getting on, but he had a sort of wild hope that the fire had all centred on his boat, and that the others might escape, and so Mary might be saved. He could not see how they fared, for the smoke hung thickly over the river. When, however, the tow-line parted and the flat ran aground, Edward saw there was but one thing to do.

"Jump ashore, lads, and try and drive the devils off ; I'll swim down to the other boat, tell them to pull up, take the women and children out of the grounded

flat, and row away for dear life. We can keep these beggars at bay till they pass."

The men gave a glad cheer. They were tired of sitting as targets for the sepoys. So the boat was run ashore under cover of a volley, and then the men sprang to land, lowered their bayonets, and dashed at the concealed foe.

"Come on, boys," said the old sergeant, who took command of the landing-party; "let 'em have it hot!"

"Hurrah!" cried the men, and plunged into the thicket.

Edward dropped over the stern of the boat and struck out for the flat. As he did so he felt a warm tingling sensation in his shoulder, and a numbness in his right arm, which fell by his side powerless. He knew he was hit, but he had no time to ask himself if it was a severe wound or not. All he could do was to throw himself on his side and paddle off to the flat with one hand. When he came alongside, he told the women that he was going down stream to bring up the other boat, and bade them hold themselves ready to scramble on board without delay.

Then he made for the other boat; but, alas! the condition of that and the second flat was worse than the others. He found that a severe volley had disabled the crew at the first fire; that they had drifted down stream and run aground; and that an attempt had been made to get them off, but that a second volley knocked several of the planks loose, and the water rushed in and swamped them, so that but for their being aground on the shallows they would all have been drowned.

Edward could have wept with vexation to see every hope of escape thus lost. But it was a time to act, not to lament. He remembered that he had promised Tom to watch over Mary as best he could, and now was the time. His own boats were hopelessly disabled, and so were the second boats, in which he had planned for the escape of the women, and now there was nothing to be done but to sell life dearly. The plans they had laid were defeated, and each must shift for himself individually. His responsibility, therefore, was at an end, so he determined to devote himself to the preservation of little Mary.

He found her sitting in the stern of the boat with a white, terrified face, clasping her child in her arms. It seemed almost a hopeless attempt, but he felt it was their only chance.

"Here, Mary, give me the child." He took it from her and laid it on his shoulder. "Now jump overboard, and put your hands

on my shoulders. Don't cling too close — don't be afraid. Now come, *maître* haste!"

He had almost to drag her overboard, for she seemed quite stupefied. It was terrible work, for he was growing very weak from loss of blood, and he had to keep the child above water as best he could and support Mary, while he prevented her clinging too closely. Nothing but the terrible danger which awaited them if they stayed behind could have nerved him; it was for life, and more than life, that he struggled.

Fortunately the smoke of the firing floated down stream on the face of the water, so that he was soon out of sight of the rebels, whose attention was, moreover, luckily for him, taken up with other things, for not a single shot was aimed at him.

Partly floating, partly swimming, they were back to the landing-place where the forlorn hope had left their boat. The boat was still there, near it a dead soldier lay prone. He had evidently been wounded, and had struggled back from the fight to the boat with some faint idea of escape, but had fallen dead ere he reached it. Edward took his musket and pouch, his own revolver, having, of course, got wet. He placed Mary and her child in the bottom of the boat, and, standing up in the stern, sculled the boat along with a single oar. His right arm was so stiff now he could not use it at all.

He paddled slowly down to the scene of their rest in the early part of the day. He had noticed a ruined temple near there, and he thought they could find a place of concealment in it. It would have been in vain to go back to Ungawallah, and this was as safe as any other place.

Faint and weak with loss of blood, he managed to get the boat ashore, and lifted Mary out of it with her child. That done, he drove the boat out into mid-stream again, for fear it should lead the enemy on their track, and then pushed through the jungle towards the ruins. It was weary work, for neither he nor Mary could do much more than crawl, but at last they reached the temple, and after carefully inspecting it found a sort of low cave or grotto beside a well, long since dried up. The entrance was almost hidden by a fallen pillar, and there were numbers of loose stones about, with which he could barricade this place of refuge against wild beasts, or those foes they feared almost worse, — the natives. After he had done this he flung himself down on the floor, utterly exhausted. Mary and he had not exchanged a word all the time. She was seated in a corner, con-

vulvively clapping her child to her bosom, and rocking it to and fro.

By this time the sounds of the firing had ceased. Edward trembled to think what that meant. He could not bear the silence. To distract his thoughts he examined the wound on his shoulder. It was only a flesh wound, but the muscle was so bruised it would be some time ere he would be able to use his arm again. He dressed the hurt as well as he could, and then set himself to clean his revolver and load it.

Mary was beginning to recover from the first stunning effects of her terror.

"Where is Tom, O, where is Tom?" she kept moaning, until Edward feared her voice might attract the notice of some straggler from the sepoy camp.

"Be still, and I'll try and see what I can do to find him, Mary. He is not far from here, but I must wait till it's dark, and it's some hours to night yet."

"O, bring Tom to me!" was all poor Mary could sigh. She was worn out with alarm, exertion, and want of food. Ted prevailed on her to take a few drops of the opiate the doctor had given him at starting, and then he made her up a rough bed of leaves and grass in the driest corner, and soon had the satisfaction of seeing her sleeping quietly with her child nestling in her arms. Weary and long was the watch Edward kept by the mouth of the little grot. At times he heard a distant shout, and trembled lest it should be an approaching body of sepoys.

Slowly, hour by hour, the day drew on towards night. A cool breeze sprang up, bearing upon it at times the cry of the wild creatures beginning to stir in the jungle now that the heat of the day was done. Soon came the swift short twilight of the tropics, when the broad orb of day dipped below the horizon, and darkness sprang to its throne in the sky.

And now the cry of the wild creatures rang out with terrible significance in the immediate neighborhood of the ruins. The bark of the jackal, the long howl of the wolf, and at intervals the sullen roar of a tiger, would be heard so close to hand that Edward was grateful that Mary was so sound asleep.

This new feature placed Edward in a new dilemma. He had been waiting for this hour to steal out to learn something of the fate of his companions, but now he did not think it would be safe to leave Mary unguarded. He carefully inspected the cave, to make sure that there was no other opening save that by which he had entered, and

was somewhat reassured to find there was not.

Then he determined to barricade the rough portal as strongly as he could and venture out to the scene of the massacre. Having accomplished the fortification to his satisfaction, he loaded his revolver and musket, and, drawing his sword, stole down to the river-bank.

All seemed quite still in the direction of the knoll, so he cautiously stepped into the stream and waded along close under the bank, as Tom had done in the morning. It was nervous work, but Ted had had some deerstalking in his younger days, and the experience stood him in good stead.

So quietly did he creep on, that more than once he almost stumbled over some wild creature which had come down to drink, but which — as startled at meeting him as he was at meeting it — bounded off and was lost in the gloom. In this stealthy manner Ted had crept to the bend where the river turned to flow under the fatal hill. As he was straining his eyes to peer through the darkness and discover whether the place was deserted, he was astonished to see that the boat in which he had made his escape had been brought up stream again, and was moored just round the bend.

Before he had time to conjecture what this meant, he heard a low voice speaking in Hindustanee, the sound seeming to come from over his head.

"Hush!" said the speaker, "keep quiet, sahib. I am a friend."

Edward recognized the voice of the friendly native who had been his guide to Ungawallah. Looking up, he saw him stretched along the branch of the tree to which the boat was moored.

"Have they moved off?" asked Edward.

"Not gone altogether; but they have left the banks of the river for their quarters at the village."

"Is there room for me up there?"

"No, sahib; you had better stop there, and I will come down and take you to a place of safety."

"No! I must go and search for my friend," said Edward.

"Why search for the dead? There can be none alive."

"Dead or alive, I must find him."

The man slid down from the tree and stood by Edward's side.

"Who is this friend? If you will describe him I will go seek. If they find me they will only think I am after plunder; but you, — they would shoot you."

Edward described Tom Martindale as

well as he could to the man, but begged him to try and discover if any were left alive, so that they might try to rescue them.

The native told him to remain quite still under the shade of the bank, and not to stir even if he heard him challenged by the sepoys, as he would contrive to lead them off in another direction.

Edward felt very disinclined to sit still and trust all to the other; but the plan was evidently a wise one, so he submitted. He crouched down in the shade of the tamarisk, and watched the figure of the native glide away like a ghost into the darkness.

For a long time — it seemed an age — Edward waited and listened, but could hear nothing. Could the native have been captured, or had he lost heart and run away? He could bear it no longer, so he quietly crept up the bank, and, crouching down on hands and knees, crawled away in the direction of the hill, taking advantage, like a wise deerstalker, of all the inequalities of the ground and any shrubs or stones that could afford concealment. It was a terribly weary stalk, for his energies were not fired by the love of sport which sustains the deerstalker. He felt he was crawling forward in this way only to see, most probably, the mangled corpse of his oldest and dearest friend.

Before long he came upon two or three dead bodies, and by the light of the stars could make out from their accoutrements that they belonged to the forlorn hope. Presently he saw a figure gliding towards him rapidly. As it came nearer he saw it was his native friend, so he gave a low whistle to attract his attention.

"There are two men badly wounded, but alive, by that clump of palms. You can rise and walk secure, for I have been to the top of the hill, and they are encamped beyond, and have not sentries on guard."

With a great sigh of relief Edward sprang to his feet and hurried to the palms. He found a private soldier and one of the civilians badly wounded. They had been left for dead by the sepoys, but the cold night air had revived them. The soldier believed he could walk with some support. The civilian had been shot in the ankle. Edward and the native made a rude litter with a couple of muskets, and raised the young fellow on it, the soldier staggering after them, leaning on the Hindoo's shoulder. They made but slow progress, however, and had to halt frequently. As they passed a patch of native grass they heard a voice faintly hailing them, and turned aside to search for its owner.

Imagine Edward's delight when he found it was Tom Martindale.

Tom had been shot in the thigh at the first discharge; but as the men drove the mutineers back with the suddenness of their attack, he managed to crawl away into the jungle, as had done two or three others who had been badly wounded, — so badly that they had all died, — and Tom declared he should have died, too, soon, if they had not come.

"And Mary?" asked Tom, grasping Edward's hand.

"Safe, Tom!"

"Thank God for that! I shall live now."

By slow degrees the little party crawled down to the river-side, and the wounded were safely deposited in the boat, and then Tom and the friendly native ran back to the scene of the conflict to gather a few shot-pouches and a musket or two. With these they returned as quickly as they could, and before long the little boat was shooting down stream again.

Ted explained to the native where his place of concealment was, and he agreed that it was as good as any other, though he feared the sepoys would be sure to scour all the country, even if the villagers did not turn out to hunt fugitives for the sake of plunder.

They got their wounded into the grotto without much difficulty, and, having collected leaves for couches, set themselves to dressing their wounds. The young civilian was sinking fast, and they felt that without the aid of a surgeon his life could not be saved. The soldier and Tom Martindale, however, promised to amend under the care of the native, who dressed their hurts with a few simples.

This done, Edward held a council of war. His garrison consisted of two available men besides himself. Mary might be relied on to load, and perhaps the civilian might be of some service in that way. But the small fort was in a bad state of defence and absolutely without provisions. This last deficiency, however, the native promised to supply. He could bring them some rice and fruit before morning, enough to support them for a few days, while he made his way to Kholaghur to bring down the troops to their rescue.

It was nearly daybreak ere the provisions were all brought and stowed away, and then the Hindoo stole quietly out of the grot, and going down to the river unmoored his boat and pulled up stream.

Imagine the delight of poor Mary when the straggling rays of light pouring into the

little den made her open her eyes and she saw Tom sitting beside her, looking pale and ill, to be sure, but still alive.

So, hemmed in, surrounded by foes, and crowded into a dark, damp little cell, the survivors of the Ungawallah garrison were once more in a state of siege; but they kept up a brave heart, and trusted in the speedy approach of their deliverers.

And the deliverers were coming, for as soon as the news reached Kholaghur succors were sent out. But in the mean time the sepoys had discovered that there were fugitives concealed somewhere in the neighborhood, and were scouring the country in search of them.

CHAPTER XXXII.

PRUE'S PEN AT WORK AGAIN.

WHEN at last Prue became conscious that it was vain to struggle against fate in the shape of Marcus Lysaght, she settled down to her old pursuits again.

Her last blow, struck for the absent Ted, was a long lecture she read Bella after Marcus and her brother had left Bremning Minor. But, to Prue's astonishment, Bella turned round on her, and asked her how she, a clergyman's wife, dared counsel her to disobey her father. This was quite a new tack for the romantic Bella to sail on, nor was this all. She actually rang the bell and sent the servant for "dear papa," and when "dear papa" heard what Prue had been saying to Bella, he fired up in style, and was as rude as he could be (which was something considerable), and wound up by forbidding Prue the house.

Prue returned home and took up her long-neglected pen and vowed to herself that she would abjure the world and turn blue-stocking. So she wrote to Pounceby to see what he would do about her novel, but received a letter from a stranger who informed her that Pounceby was wound up, that the Woman's Home was sold, and the new proprietors did not see their way to publishing *Cyrl Markham*; or, *Gold and Goodness*. That very veracious history had been laid aside in an unfinished state, and so Prue had to wade all through her manuscript in order to recover the thread of her plot, which was not very encouraging work. But she persevered, and, having completed it, sent it up to London to Mr. Mudsill, an enterprising gentleman, who had begun as a printer, had taken a publisher's stock and business for a debt for printing, and who, by dint of smartness and an easy, not to say pachydermatous, conscience, was mak-

ing a fairish trade, that would have been a prosperous one if he had not displayed the same ability for spending as for making money.

He wrote in high terms of praise of her novel, and assured her that he was charmed at meeting with a second *Jane Eyre*. Little Prue, who had not read *Jane Eyre*, but had somehow picked up a notion from some fogey review that it was not a feminine book, was not altogether flattered at this. But she was very much delighted when Mr. Mudsill assured her that he should be happy to publish the book at their own risk and give her two thirds of the profits.

So Prue agreed to let him have the novel on those advantageous terms, and, in accordance with his advice, immediately set to work to write another. "He was prepared, on the same terms, to publish any number of works from her pen, if at all up to the average of *Cyrl Markham*," said he.

Cyrl Markham accordingly made his appearance, with a loud flourish of trumpets from one or two papers, which Prue read with great pride and trembling. Alas! she little knew the real value of the critiques, or the cause of their laudations. How could she tell that the sub-editor of the *Penny Poppun* always spoke well of books he got to review, in order to get more books from the publishers! — for even novels will fetch a price in Bookseller's Row if they have not been cut by the reviewer! Similarly she was ignorant that Mudsill and the proprietor of the *Rational Review* were friends, and that she owed her most favorable notice to the mistake of its writer, who thought she was the wife of a gentleman of the name of Harding from whom he hoped to elicit a loan in consideration of the critique!

Of course, *Cyrl Markham* was deservedly pitched into by many independent journals; but Mudsill did not send her copies of them, and newspapers — especially literary journals — were as rare at Bremning Minor as seal-skin waistcoats are in Central Africa.

Prudence, who felt she had now set in for a literary character, used to study her reviews attentively, — on the sly, — in the hope of becoming *au fait* in everything affecting the republic of letters. But she was not much wiser for her reading. She found that ever and anon new and promising stars were rising above the horizon, but that after shining for a space they disappointed the expectations which had been formed of them.

Meanwhile she scribbled away at every leisure minute, working hard to keep all her household work in hand and yet get on with her literary labors. It was a most

fearful drudgery, but she did not mind. She was looking forward to the day when she should be a successful novelist. She was longing for the hour when she might reveal herself to James as "the celebrated author of *Cyril Markham*, etc.," with a large balance at her banker's.

So *Cyril Markham* was succeeded by *Gervase's Guerdon: A Tale of the Middle Ages*. Then followed *Rank and Ruin*, succeeded by *A Woman's Life*, and *The House among the Heather*. These novels were all brought out one after the other as fast as Prue wrote them, and they were all, if Mr. Mudsill could be believed, very great successes, and they must certainly have been made to pay somehow, for the firm did not hesitate once as to the chance of another novel from the same hand proving profitable.

The real truth is that Mudsill had reduced novel-publishing to a science. He knew exactly how many copies to print, and how much to lay out on them. There is a certain steady demand for trash in three volumes which is sure to repay those who supply the article, always provided they can produce the materials for the supply pretty cheap. It may not appear, at first sight, that the offer to pay Prue two thirds of the profits (after taking all the risk and cost of production themselves) was a very cheap way of procuring material; but it was, as you will perceive on a closer examination of the system. Mudsill had made up his mind that the balance-sheet should show (after printing, publishing, and advertising expenses) exactly nothing as the profit, and that was a sum of which it was as easy to give two thirds as one, — and then it looked generous.

Of course, however, these balances were never struck unless called for, and then their result always took Mudsill quite aback. So in the interim he kept assuring Mrs. Harding of the great and deserved success her novel was achieving, and Mrs. Harding was totting up imaginary two thirds of immense sums, unheard of (at all events, in those days) in the annals of literary profits.

At last a time came when James and Prue were a little pressed for money, so she wrote for a check on account of *Cyril Markham*. For the first time since they had begun their correspondence Mr. Mudsill omitted to take immediate notice of her letter. She wrote again. No answer still. So then she dropped him a little peppery line, to which he responded, in a tone of injury, that accounts could not be made out in a day, and that as soon as he knew how

the balance on *C. M.* stood he would let her know.

The temporary pressure passed away, and Prue had almost forgotten the application when she got a most extraordinarily complicated sheet, which professed to be a statement of *Cyril Markham's* affairs. It was elaborate and unintelligible, except on one point, and that was that there was no profit at all on that very successful novel!

Prue was horrified. She invented an excuse for a short visit to town, and within a few days presented herself at her publisher's.

Mr. Mudsill was civil to a degree — slimily polite. It was with great difficulty that Prue could get him to discuss the very matter that had brought her to town. He fenced and evaded the question as much as possible; but Prue was determined to bring him to an account, and so at last he found it would be better to come to the point.

Accordingly he fetched out all sorts of books in which the transactions with regard to Prue's novels were entered. Then he gave a long and complicated account of the system of thirteen to the dozen, and so much off for subscription, and so much off for the great circulating libraries. He went into the question of presentation copies for the press, and, in fact, poured the whole publishing business on Prue's devoted head.

In some cases candor is the best concealment. This frank avowal of all the mysteries of the trade enabled him to conceal some little facts which would have told a different story. For, but for the dust thus thrown in her eyes, Prue even would have seen that if the whole edition of a work is sold out there must be some profit, if it has been produced on simple business-like principles.

Prue did not win much by her interview. She left in a still more muddled state as to balance-sheets, expenses of publishing, and the ruinous system of discounts to the trade. So she returned to Bremning Minor in a confused and unsatisfactory state of mind, determining not to send Mr. Mudsill the new novel she had just finished until she received intelligible accounts of all she had already published. She wrote to that effect to him, but received no answer.

It was some months after her London trip that she received a formal legal letter, stating that Mr. M. had parted with the business to Mr. Chose. Then she learnt that he had called together his creditors, amongst whom, oddly enough, there were few, if any, of the authors, and there was a composition, and Mr. Mudsill transferred his business ability and integrity to the task of promoting bubble companies, and

hen last heard of had disappeared with the wife of one man and the wealth of several others.

Prue wrote to Mr. Chose about her novel, and he referred her to the accountants, who were trying to make clear accounts of the affairs of the late business. And these accountants sent her balance-sheets which were so beautifully balanced that there were no profits and no losses in any one case.

Then Prue saw that she had been cheated, and she was not particularly surprised, in writing to Mr. Chose and proposing to continue her business relations with him, to receive his answer to say that he should be happy to publish for her on commission, but that he did not feel justified in embarking in any speculation in her novels.

But Prue was not to be disheartened. She saw an advertisement in one of the papers, offering a reward for a prize tale for a new cheap publication, and she sent in two stories. One of these she was paid for. It was the prize story, and she got for it about half of what she ought to have received, at something ridiculously low per column when it appeared. The other was mislaid, or never reached the advertiser. At any rate it was lost, until one day, many years after, Prue by chance met with it in a halfpenny weekly, figuring under an altered title.

The prize story, however, got her another job of the same sort. It would have got her several if the ingenious publisher of the story had forwarded to her the letters addressed to her at the office of the paper. But he was too old a hand to do that. It was by the merest chance (probably by bribing some understrapper at the publishing office) that her second employer found her out. This brought a little grist to the mill. Enough to buy shoes for Prue the second, and to pay for the washing of the Rev. James's surplice, which the parish would only undertake to wash once a year, and which it was loath to see washed oftener than that, even though it did not pay for the extravagance, for fear of wearing it out.

Prue also tried the magazines, and got snubbed and rejected. She again went the round of the novel-publishers, and with no better success than before. Finally, she tried to get some translating to do, but that was of no avail. And then she gave up literature from sheer exhaustion, not from any want of pluck.

Her next attempt was to turn an honest penny by answering an advertisement offering to teach a ladylike employment of an artistic character, — "no knowledge of draw-

ing required, — and employment given when proficient." This turned out to be the coloring of photographs, and she had to buy materials and pay for lessons (to be given by letter), and when she could do it well was to be paid about a penny an hour for her work.

And all this time James knew nothing of his wife's struggles to earn an honest penny. And there came a little sister for Prue the second, and she was christened Mary. "Another mouth to feed," thought Prue, "and all my schemes for adding something to the store are failing." And she grew very desponding for a while, for she felt she was struggling in vain, — as vainly as she had fought to keep Marcus Lysaght from stealing away the charge that Edward had given her when he went away to India.

Bella and Marcus Lysaght were married during Prue's literary career. They were married at Bremning Minor, but James did not perform the ceremony. It was a very grand wedding, and there was a grand feast for the village people, who duly made beasts of themselves on bad cider in honor of the occasion, and were maudlinly loyal to "the Squoire an' vam'ly," like the poor feudal vassals they were. There was plenty to eat and drink for them all for this one day, a band on the Manor-house lawn for them to dance to, and there were fireworks at night. And then, having done their duty, like supers on a stage at pantomime time, having waved their goblets and shouted long life to the bride, they were allowed to subside into squalor and poverty. They filled up the stage, and were very necessary adjuncts to the wedding, but, that over, the squire didn't care to set eyes on them again. Let them go back to their tumble-down hovels, their bad drainage, their worse ventilation, and their still worse fare.

The bride and bridegroom went to Killarney for their honeymoon. Bella was delighted with that romantic spot, but it was the end of romance for her. Marcus soon tired talking of novels, and set about forming her character. He succeeded in making her quite indifferent to him, and devoted to society and its gayeties. He succeeded in making her despise her relations as bores and her birthplace as a land of savages; in short, he made a fashionable woman of the world of her. Whether she was more agreeable in that character than as a silly, sentimental girl I cannot say, but I suppose he thought so.

As for Philip, he netted his two hundred a year, and painted the lily and gilded the refined gold in his luxurious chambers. Of course he held his head much higher now,

having the Hon. Marcus Lysaght, the future Earl of Mountgarret, for his brother-in-law. Marcus got him parliamentary practice, too, which was very easy and exceedingly lucrative. Besides which advantages, derived from having a budding earl for a brother-in-law, Philip contrived to pick up a treasure to a flourishing company, so that he was rolling in clover. He rode a splendid horse in the Park now, and had a cab and a mail phaeton, which, however, might have been more fittingly styled a female phaeton, since it was in that vehicle that the fair Amélie of the opera condescended (in a pink bonnet and lemon gloves) to allow him to drive her to Richmond or Greenwich.

And, luckily for Philip, the old squire was beginning to break down. For, if truth must out, as Philip prospered Philip got idle, and there were not so many briefs left at Mr. Charlwood's chambers as there used to be in his industrious days. But no matter! was n't he brother-in-law of Earl Mountgarret, and in receipt of a good allowance, and in Parliamentary practice, and treasurer to a flourishing company? Yes! and had n't he any amount of credit, too, which is as good as money any day, or very nearly so?

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE SECOND BATTLE OF BREMNING MINOR.

FOR all the good that Bella personally had done in Bremning Minor one might have supposed she would be little missed after her marriage. But one would have supposed wrongly, as is generally the case with the wisest of suppositions. Although Bella had never taken an active part in the promotion of the village's welfare, her passive presence had been beneficial, as was discovered very soon after her departure.

The fact is that she had formed a sort of safety-valve for the squire. That amiable gentleman was subject to frequently recurrent fits of ill-temper, which, while he had Bella with him, passed off in little grumbles at her, like threatening thunder, but which, when she was gone, and there was no conductor to carry off the electricity, accumulated and broke out in violent tempests. He worked himself into the most shocking furies, and stalked out into the village full of wrath and bent upon mischief. Woe betide the luckless urchin who was caught pelting down horse-chestnuts then! Woe betide the susceptible hedger or ditcher who had knocked off work for a minute to have a chat with Patty with the milk-pails! Woe betide the bird-boy who had fallen asleep in

the sun, or the wayfarer who wandered from the footpath across the fields! Yea, woe betide the ox or the sheep or the pig that had strayed, the geese that had trespassed, or the fowls that had flown over the garden-walls when Squire Charlwood, in these days of his solitude, sallied out with the storm-cloud on his brow!

But he was not content with executing these raids without deliberation. Sitting in his lonely mansion,—it was lonely, indeed, for the servants, including even the old housekeeper, kept out of his way as much as possible,—devouring his own bitter heart in silence and savageness of spirit, he framed all sorts of cunning cruelties and artful acts of hostility to his neighbors. I think it probable—I hope, indeed,—that at first these schemes were the mere passing fancies of an angry mind, driven half mad by isolation, like a rat bricked into its hole. But if so, they grew in power over the old man in time, and he began to carry out his bad conceptions. James Harding was, of course, certain to be one of the earliest sufferers by the old man's hostility.

The squire had a good deal of experience of that miniature world, a country village. He knew exactly the people he had to deal with, and the feelings on which he might count. And he knew his own power as squire, and the position of James as parish priest.

There was one class in the parish which he knew thoroughly,—the farmers. It was through the farmers that he saw his way to annoying James.

Now there were in Bremning a few very honest, fine fellows among the farmers. But they were the least influential of the class,—often the least prosperous. The majority were men of the good old agricultural school; men who locked up their corn, with the people starving around them, until the price of wheat rose to something tremendous; men who railed at weather, and lamented bad harvests, and yet were anything but grateful for a good one, because they thought prices would go down.

The Bremning farmers were a charming set of men. They had long opposed the opening of the village school on the ground that the poor people ought not to know too much, and could do the work they (the farmers) wanted of them without any "book-learning," as they called it. They, with still firmer obstinacy, set their faces against a proposed restoration of the church, because the big loose-box pews would have been removed, and they could not have slept comfortably through the service and sermon. So that, altogether, these were not the men

on whom James could count for much support, or even friendly feeling, while he and the squire were not on good terms.

For the squire they had a sort of uncouth, feudal regard, and it was strengthened by the ties of self-interest. He was their landlord, and not only their landlord but the landlord of their laborers. It was wise to keep on good terms with him, because he could help them to grind the faces of their poor, — and he did.

There were certain laborers' cottages in Bremning, and they belonged to the squire. If the laborers of the Bremning farmers were not fortunate enough to rent one of these, or a part of one, they had many a long mile to trudge from the neighboring village to their daily work at early dawn. These cottages the squire let in a lump to the farmers, who formed a sort of society for the purpose, and sublet them to their workmen. And if the workmen declined to labor for the handsome sum of seven shillings a week (liable to deductions for cider and inferior corn supplied at a little more than its intrinsic worth) they had to trudge from the next village every morning, for there was no hovel in all Bremning that would be let to them. Of course, they might go and work somewhere else, provided the law of settlement did not chain them down to one spot, like tethered beasts of the field. Any one who knows anything about the English agricultural laborer will not expect there was a great emigration of toilers from Bremning.

You see there was a tie of interest, a breeches-pocket regard, existing between the farmers and the squire. They were his, heart and soul; an expression which I may use, for they must have had hearts and souls, these farmers, although they did give so little evidence of their possession.

As long, then, as there was apparent peace between the squire and the parson, the farmers, though they did not love the latter, at all events concealed their dislike and hatred. But when it was known in the parish that Mr. Charlwood and James had had a difference, their conduct towards the latter underwent a considerable change. To be sure, they continued to go to church, mechanically, as they went to market. But there was no recognition for the clergyman as he passed any chance knot of talkers that had collected in the churchyard; if he met any of them in the village, there was no courteous converse, no "Fine day, sir!" or "Morning, sir, and how be your good lady?"

This was bad enough, but by and by the squire very quietly incited the farmers to

covert acts of opposition. He took opportunities of letting fall little hints as to steps the farmers might take in the vestry in any chance conversation he had with them. The suggestion would in time dawn on the intelligence of the agriculturist, who would be under the impression that it was an idea of his own, and be proud of it accordingly. In this way there grew to be a strong opposition to James in the vestry. It showed itself first of all by numerous acts of petty annoyance, — by a stolid opposition and a vulgar insolence of language. But before long it took a more active form. It culminated in a refusal to vote a church-rate.

The squire chuckled over the success of his mischief. He felt that all this was his doing, and that James knew it was, too. And he therefore took a spiteful delight in watching James's struggle with his difficulties in the parish.

I need hardly tell you that James was no longer almoner for the Manor-house. He did his best not to allow the withdrawal of the squire's contributions to be felt by the poor objects of charity, but it was a drain on his means which he could ill afford. And now, when the church-rate was stopped too, the call was too heavy for him.

The village doctor, who spoke to James rather on the sly, and when he thought the squire was not looking, for fear of losing the Manor-house practice, asked him why he did not try what the law would do to help him. But James shook his head. It was but a very uncertain aid, and he was, moreover, especially anxious to avoid any course that could make the church unpopular by an appearance of avarice or tyranny. It was too high and holy, he thought, to want the support of a bailiff and a distraint, but even if it did need it, he would rather not see the arm of the law stretched out, and the interest of the clergyman fighting with that of his people. This was a chivalrous and perhaps sentimental view of the question, for which reasons the farmers, not being chivalrous or sentimental, did not seem to appreciate it, except as a triumph for themselves. But this even was not the only evil that the squire's aversion wrought.

The poor of the village were so crushed down that they had learnt to be hypocrites. They magnified their real ills, and they exaggerated their real feelings; they were driven to do so to earn a crust or an alms. And Hypocrisy brought with it other evil spirits worse than itself, and they took possession of the ill-tutored, miserable wretches. And one of the evil spirits was Ingratitude, and another Greed. So the poor, finding James's charity, despite his struggles, a little

narrowed, forgot all his kindness to them, and murmured because there was stint. And, furthermore, in a sort of vague idea that there was some hope for them to benefit by siding with the stronger, — whereas there was not the faintest in the world, — they began to imitate the farmers, clumsily, and to side, as it were, with the Manor-house against the parsonage.

This was very horrible, was it not? So ungrateful! So mean! So treacherous! Exactly; it was all this, but you see these poor, crushed, crawling creatures had been brought up in the bad school of necessity. They had learnt to fawn, and to cringe, and to grovel at the feet of their benefactors, and in that humiliation the sense of gratitude somehow was lost. Yes! It was horrible indeed in these ignorant wretches. But then, thank goodness, meanness, treachery, and ingratitude are confined solely to these miserable animals; people who have had better opportunities, and are placed in more fortunate circumstances, never display those vices!

James was sorely tried by this state of things in his parish. He was a very brave and earnest man, but this battling against overpowering odds took the spirit out of him, — and small wonder! You may be as bold and determined as you choose, but it is vain to fling yourself against a cliff and try to beat it down with your bare fists. You may try it for a time, but you must at last sink down exhausted and bleeding and despairing.

Despair was getting hold of James. His sermons were appeals most piteous to listen to, but he pleaded in vain. Only the gray-headed squire, sitting in the high crimson pew with the curtains drawn close around, listened to or cared for the discourse. To him it was pleasant enough as a proof of his wicked success.

So James began to move moodily about his parish, doing his duty honestly and righteously, but without the old delight and eagerness. He tried to struggle with his increasing depression, but to no purpose. He felt too plainly that henceforth there was no sun to shine upon his labors, no harvest to reap, no love to win, no sympathy to rely on. It was a dull, dark waste to toil through, not because of the labor to be done, — that he did not shrink from, — but because the labor would be fruitless. He knew thoroughly that the minister who has not the hearts and sympathies of his flock is but as the sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal. It may not be the minister's fault that he fails to enlist the feelings of his people, but the punishment falls on him.

James Harding felt this acutely, and it flung a gloom over his life, so that the once happy home even — the place where a man should find shelter and sunlight in his worst of troubles — was darkened by this sorrow.

James never complained. He did not murmur, though at times he sighed. He never revealed, even to his wife, how deeply he was wounded by this failure. But Prue's loving eyes were quick enough to see the trouble and divine its cause. And after that there was but one thing she could do, — she must strive to remedy it.

Thanks to Prue's care and kindness, Martha Ogleby had come at last to be a tolerably prudent and trustworthy nurse. To be sure, she still would wonder in a stolid and apathetic way when anything very new and quite unaccounted for in her experience of the laundry and nursery turned up; but as the whole she was so devoted to the children, that her mere instincts kept her straight, and Prue felt the children were safe with her. There was only one heresy that she seemed likely to instil into the little folk's mind, and that was a very harmless one, — nothing more serious, in fact, than garblings and alterations of the old-established fairy tales and nursery legends. From an antiquarian point of view it was highly nefarious to tamper with the old traditions, but Prue was not an antiquarian, and was not horrified, although Martha would insist that Cinderella's mother was a washerwoman, and her father a baron; that the Sleeping Beauty was overtaken by slumber because she wounded her hand with the copper-stick; that —

"This little pig went to market,
And this little pig stayed at home,
And this little pig had a basket,
And this little pig had none,
And this little pig cried, 'Weeek, weeek, weeek!'
I'm going to carry the washing home";

also that Little Red Riding-Hood's grandmother was bedridden in consequence of her legs having given out at the washtub. All these harmless misquotations, arising from her having had soap-suds in her eyes in her earliest views of life, Martha made in perfect good faith and without any intention of giving undue importance to her mother's profession.

Prue, therefore, could leave the children in her charge without anxiety while she set herself to curate's work, to try and win back the affection and sympathy of the people of Bremming Minor.

I need hardly say that the farmers' wives were hardly the sort of people among whom Prue had been in the habit of selecting her intimate friends. But she set to work now to try and establish the most

friendly relations with them. It was up-hill and difficult work, for the she-agriculturists had a very stiff pride of their own, and yet felt that Prue was condescending in seeking them. So at first there was a good deal of ice to be broken, but Prue's kind smile did something considerable towards thawing it, and after a hard struggle she succeeded in gathering about her a little circle of farmers' wives. They were jealous of each other, and it was not always easy to keep peace among them, but Prue succeeded to a marvel. It was quite a new life for these women, and a very pleasant one to occupy the intervals of their domestic labors, for, with all their pride, they worked like servants in their own homes. Then Prue craftily turned her organization to use, and made a sort of Dorcas society of it. She managed, too, by good generalship, to interest some of her new friends in the poor. I'm afraid a part (I won't say how large) of that interest originated in the pleasure it gave "Mrs. Turmutts" or "Farmer Wutt's good lady" to be seen doing the Lady Bountiful in such genteel company. But the result, as far as the benefit to the poor was concerned, was just as good, and it made the poor folk grateful to Prue for awakening such an interest in them.

But this was not all that this sagacious, not to say crafty, woman was aiming at. She knew that the women to a great extent influenced their husbands on matters not purely of an agricultural and business nature. Before long the squire found that there was a growing feeling in favor of the parson in the vestry. A little party sprang up which supported him, and those who had always been in his favor, but felt themselves too weak to do good, and had been too cowardly to speak out, at once sided with it, and the opposition was not very earnest, for those who cared least for James had received orders from their home governments to treat him well for the sake of his wife.

Eventually the squire, who hated to be crossed, was so put out by this alteration of opinion that he snubbed some of his best friends in the vestry, and then they did from wounded pride what they would not do for justice,—they took James's part; so the squire withdrew from parochial matters altogether, and things went on smoothly,—at least as smoothly as they could be expected to go on between James, who had his views of his duty towards his neighbor, and the farmers, who had theirs of their duty towards themselves.

In this way was fought the second battle of Bremning Minor, and in this one Prue came off victorious.

James Harding thoroughly appreciated his brave little wife's generalship. She had overcome difficulties which he had found insurmountable; she had infused new life and strength into him; she had achieved a great conquest, and yet there she was back again by the fireside in her neat little gray gown and her black silk apron nursing her children, and looking as if she had never stirred out of the ingle-nook,—at all events, showing no sign of the pride of victory, no hint that she had succeeded where he had failed. She was still the same confiding, affectionate little woman, looking up admiringly to her husband; and that, let me tell you, was a source of great comfort to James. She might very fairly have assumed an air of superiority, he felt, but their positions would have been at once altered. Now the happy current of their lives flowed on as calmly and musically as ever.

There was only one trouble that darkened their horizon now: they were very poor, and had many calls upon their purse, and they had children to bring up. Prue had been well brought up in one sense: she had been taught all the elegant accomplishments, but of the solid and useful portion of education had received but a small smattering. She had, however, good shrewd sense enough to have picked up, as experience grew, all that was absolutely necessary. Now she felt she must put herself to school again for the sake of her children.

So James one day came into the nursery, unobserved, because Martha was chanting in a high and not particularly musical key how when

"The maid was in the garden
Hanging out her clothes,
There came a little blackbird
And pecked off her nose."

and he found Prue hard at work, with a lot of very dry and dull school-books before her.

"Why, what's all this, Prue? Are you going to open a school for young ladies?"

Prue gave a start and blushed. But she said, "Yes, she was."

"And who are your first pupils to be, madam?"

"Sir, they are at present in Martha's charge,—there they are! Do you know them, or shall I formally introduce them? The taller of the two is Miss Harding,—Miss Prudence Harding, the daughter of a poor clergyman. The other, with the pink toes, and three parts of her right fist in her mouth, is Miss Mary Harding, sister of Miss Prudence, also the daughter of a poor clergyman, who cannot afford a governess for them, so I am going to undertake their edu-

cation for nothing a year and no extras. But as, unfortunately, my own small stock of learning has got a little rusty for want of use, I am furbishing it up a bit."

"You're a model wife, Prue!" said James, raising her hand reverently to his lips.

"I hope I try to do my duty," she answered, with a sweet smile; "but if you want a model, take Miss Mary yonder. Did you ever see such beautifully mottled arms and legs! And there are toes! I'm quite sure you never saw such queer little crumpled, crinkled toes, papa. And O, those fingers, that always will get into baby's mouth, after feeble and loitering attempts to get into her eyes! I don't know what we shall do with them; put them in bags, I think. Martha must really keep those naughty fingers out of baby's mouth, must n't she, papa!"

Martha grins, and says "Aw!" but does not distinctly promise to interfere so far with baby's liberty. In strict confidence I will tell you that I think she encourages that small person in the reprehensible habit of sticking as many of her fingers as she can into her mouth, for the result of the amusement is that the tips of the fingers become flabby and wrinkled, as if they had been doing a long spell of duty at the wash-tub, and I verily believe Martha considers this combination of the two most important things in the world — washing and a baby — to be a triumphant success, and one of the most beautiful things humanity has ever been blessed with the opportunity of seeing.

As for little Prue the second, she has so advanced in stature, strength, and knowledge since we first made her acquaintance, that she can stagger towards her mamma, hang on by her gown, point at her sister, and say very gravely, with large, eager eyes, "Baba — pingers — mouse!"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

TOM'S FIRST TIGER.

FOR two weary days and nights the fugitives kept watch and ward in their little grotto by the ruins. Slowly the hot dawn widened into the full blaze of tropical mid-day, and on through the fiery noon, till the long shadows crept round, pointing eastward, and the sultry orb sank down the cloudless west. Slowly the night darkened overhead as the stars glittered out, mocked by the fireflies that swarmed from the jungle. Slowly the long hours of night wasted,

while the voices of the wild creatures of the forest echoed through the gloom, now far away, now close at hand. Slowly the eastern sky melted into a trembling gray, and the beasts, hushing their fierce cries, slunk away to their dens, and the great sun sprang up like a giant refreshed.

Poor Mary, lulling her child in her arms, dreaded the long watches of the night, pressing her baby more closely to her breast whenever the howl of some ravenous beast rang out closer than ordinary to the ruins. But then the men dreaded the day more, when the mutineers, more ferocious than the beasts of prey, ranged the neighborhood. Again and again parties of stragglers passed close to the place of their concealment, and Ted and the others of the little garrison grasped their weapons with a quick, firm grip, prepared to sell their lives dearly. But the voices died out, and the footsteps sank into silence, and there was a great sigh of relief.

All this time the want of proper surgical care and the confinement in such a small damp prison of a place did not help Tom Martindale to get better of his wound; nor was the soldier much improved in strength, though, being more used to roughing it than Tom, he bore up better.

As for the young civilian, he was sinking hourly. On the morning of the second day he was so terribly exhausted that he begged them to lay him in the corner of the grotto, out of the sight of Mary, and let him die in peace. But Mary overheard him, and insisted on sitting by him and tending him.

He was the only son of a widow. His father had been in the navy, but was drowned before the boy was ten years old. The bereaved mother had retired to Ireland, her native country, to bring up her boy as she best could with the limited means she possessed. An old admiral, who had been an intimate friend of her father's, got the lad a nomination for the Indian Civil Service, and the gallant young fellow had studied day and night to fit himself for his examination. He had been out but a few years, and was returning home on leave when the mutiny broke out.

Poor fellow! he faced death as bravely as he had faced the foe, but when he spoke of his mother there came a spasm of sharp anguish over his face; he would have given worlds only to live long enough just to see her once more. But it was not to be. By noon on the second day the pain had passed away. It passed away never to return, for its cessation was a sign that mortification had begun.

He dictated a few lines to his mother,

which Ted wrote down in his pocket-book, crying like a child—or a strong, kindly man—as he did so. It would seem almost a sacrilege to copy those words, so my readers must let me fold up the tiny scrap of paper which is to be such a sad legacy,—such a treasured, never-dying recollection and memento of her lost son to the poor mother miles away across the sea.

As the shades of evening came on without, the shades of death gathered within the little refuge. Mortification spread upwards,—it rose like a tide of the great sea of oblivion, inch by inch creeping up to the poor, feeble, fluttering heart.

And now the cold wave touched the vital centre, and the pulse was stopped.

Mary noticed the change in his face, and bent over him. His mind had wandered far away, and as the womanly figure hung over him in the dim light he fancied his mother was by him.

"Have you come at last, mother dear?" he whispered faintly. "I have been lying awake to see you,—I could not get to sleep. But I shall sleep now. Good night; God bless you!" And then he slept.

It was necessary, for the sake of the survivors, that the poor fellow's corpse should not remain long in the grotto. A speedy burial of the dead is the safety of the living in India.

It was agreed that the grave would be safest dug in the little hollow close by where the mouth of the dried-up well was. Edward and the soldier turned up the earth with their bayonets, while Tom kept watch to warn them of any approaching footsteps. It was slow work, for their tools were but poor substitutes for mattock and pickaxe, and they had to work as quietly as possible. It was night before they had finished their task. They wrapped the poor fellow in the soldier's gray great-coat, and laid him down in the shallow and hasty grave, over which they recited what they could recall of the burial-service. Then they shovelled the earth in again, replaced the sods, and piled a rough cairn of stones above the grave as a rude monument to the dead. When this melancholy task was over they crept back into their place of shelter and barricaded themselves in again.

Tom was worn and weak with his wound, and Ted and the soldier were wearied with their long and harassing labor. Mary, too, was tired out by her anxious vigil by the dying man. The garrison was not in a condition to keep a good watch that night. One by one they dropped off asleep, Mary on her bed of leaves and grass in the inner corner,—the safest spot,—while Tom, Ted,

and the soldier made up their couches across the entrance against the barrier of stones, each with his loaded rifle leaning beside the loophole he was to guard.

Ted was dreaming of I know not what,—possibly of fickle, false-hearted Bella, but I should say probably not,—when he was roused by Tom's hand on his shoulder.

"Hist!" whispered Tom. "Don't speak!"

"What is it?" asked Ted in the same undertone.

"Listen!"

Edward listened. There was something stirring outside. They could distinctly hear something moving among the loose stones. They could detect, too, a short, quick panting.

Could it be the friendly native who had to run for his life from some pursuers, and could not find his way to the grotto? They listened anxiously, and then they became aware that there was more than one hurried breathing. They peered out, but the night was cloudy, and they could see nothing. A cold perspiration, not of fear exactly, but of intense nervous excitement, broke out on Ted's forehead. He could feel, too, that Tom was shaking. There was something mysterious and unaccountable in these strange sounds. All at once the mystery was solved.

The heavy cloud which had obscured the moon sailed slowly away, and the faint rays struggled down through the ruins and the surrounding trees. As the light thus broke out, there came from within a few paces of the entrance of the grotto a burst of horrible laughter. It was immediately echoed by another fiendish shriek of merriment.

At that incongruous and fearful sound both Mary and the soldier woke from their slumbers. But Tom and Edward had seen and heard enough now to be able to allay their alarm. They could see through the loopholes a couple of hyenas busily engaged in tearing down the cairn they had erected over their dead companion's grave. The hideous brutes had been guided by their terrible instinct to the place where the body was buried, and were trying to rifle the tomb.

"By Jove! I can't see this, Ted," whispered Tom, grasping his rifle.

"Don't fire, for Heaven's sake! you don't know how near the enemy may be."

"But you won't stop here and see the brutes tear the poor fellow from his grave?"

"No, certainly not! These beasts are cowardly creatures. You can drive them away with a stick, I believe. Let us try and pelt them off with stones first, and if

that does n't do, I'll go out and give them cold steel. There's plenty of time, for they have to drag away all those stones."

Saying this, Edward set to work to enlarge his loophole sufficiently to let him take aim with a stone at the hideous ghoul.

The hyenas looked up towards the grotto as soon as they heard a movement there, but took no notice, going on tearing at the stones, which, considering their size, they moved with ease.

All of a sudden they paused and snuffed the air. Then they began to shuffle about uneasily, and trot up and down, as if about to desist from their labors, and then returning as if loath to leave them. Then they snuffed again, looked fixedly in a certain direction, and finally, with a short, fierce yell of snappish laughter, they scampered hastily from the scene.

What could this mean? The fugitives learnt soon enough. As Tom and Ted peered out through the loopholes, they saw a long shadow glide out into the moonlight and steal silently along to the well. It might have been a ghost, so noiseless was its tread.

It was an enormous tiger! Whether it had heard the rejoicings of the hyenas, and had come to dispossess them of their banquet, or it had been accustomed to drink at the well, and was coming to slake its thirst, not knowing the well was dried up, Tom and Edward could not tell. But as it was crossing the hollow it seemed to get the wind of the grotto and its occupants. It paused, raising its head and gazing towards the barrier, uttered a low, ominous growl.

"By Jove! it has got scent of us," said Ted.

"Yes, and here it comes," answered Tom, as the monster glided noiselessly up to the barrier.

In another second its yellow luminous eyes were glaring in through the loophole in front of Tom, and its hot breath fanned his face, as, after a few short inquiring sniffs, it gave a long fierce snort. It was rather too close to be comfortable, and Tom had a vague recollection of having read of the enormous strength of the tiger. He expected it to lean its shoulder against the stones and force its way in, or else he imagined it would dash down the barrier with one blow of its paw, — I cannot tell which, for both these ideas flashed through his brain with the rapidity of lightning. Without waiting to argue the chances, he raised his rifle, thrust it through the loophole into the beast's face, and fired.

There was a loud report, resounding with stunning effect in the confined space of the

grotto, and a fierce howl from the tiger drowned in the echoes of the shot beaten back from the woods, and then all was quiet again.

"You've killed your first tiger, Tom," said Edward, gravely, when the smoke cleared away and the huge brute with his head shattered to pieces lay outside the barrier. "You've killed your first tiger, and I fear your last. That shot will bring the human tigers on us before long, I'm afraid."

"What could I do, Ted? The beast was close upon us."

"He could not have pulled down the barrier, or, at all events, there would have been time to kill him when he set about doing it."

"But, even supposing the pandies heard the shot, they would n't know where it came from."

"Not the exact spot, but it will narrow their search within certain limits, and there, outside, lies the evidence against us."

"O, we'll lug the brute in here."

"I fancy you'll have enough of his company in ten minutes, if the morning's warm."

"Then let's throw him into the well."

"That's a better suggestion; but it will only delay our discovery a minute or so. These demons will quarter every inch of the ground as carefully as the best-bred dog."

So Tom and the soldier dragged the dead tiger to the dry well, and threw him in, flinging in some dead leaves and grass, in order to conceal him if possible.

Tom Martindale had unconsciously conferred a great benefit on a neighboring native village. The tiger he had shot was a notorious man-eater, which had haunted the vicinity for a long time, and had defied all the efforts of the native *shikaries* to destroy him. One of these natives was on the lookout for him on this very night, perched in a tree, on the borders of the jungle. This hunter had frequently attended the *sabits* when they came on shooting expeditions, and he at once recognized the crack of the European rifle, and was enabled by his old sporting experience to make out the quarter whence it came. He knew the sepoys were on the lookout for some fugitives, and he thought it likely they might reward the poor villager who pointed out their whereabouts. Forgetting caution in his desire for gain, he slid down from his perch and "stalked" in the direction of the ruins. It was lucky for him that the man-eater was slain, or his avarice might have cost him dear.

He crawled up within view of the grotto

past in time to see Tom and the soldier browning the dead tiger into the dry well. He could not restrain a grunt of satisfaction in recognizing the defunct monster, and he felt a sort of wondering admiration for these *sahibs*, who were such inveterate sportsmen that they would go tiger-shooting when their lives were in imminent danger. But he was not sufficiently impressed with gratitude to the *sahibs* for destroying the man-eater to relinquish his idea of betraying them to their enemies. So he marked the spot down well, and then went home to his hut, intending to visit the mutineers the first thing in the morning.

Why should I linger over the recital?

It was near noon when Edward, whose turn it was to keep watch, gave the signal of the approach of the enemy. The sepoy were coming on in force, led by the *shikarry*, who was graphically describing what he had seen as he came along. He was so evidently guiding the enemy to their stronghold, that Tom Martindale quietly covered him with his rifle at once.

"That villager's mine, remember!" he whispered to Ted.

"You shall have him. Now, Mary, stand here and load as rapidly as you can. And remember, lads, only two of us must fire at a time, so as to have a bullet ready in case of a rush. They can only attack us from the front. The rock overhangs above us, and the temple covers one flank, and the dry well the other. Reserve your fire till you're quite sure of your man. And now all we can pray for is that the rescue may be here soon, for our ammunition won't hold out forever."

As he spoke, the *shikarry* and the leading sepoy descended into the little amphitheatre which was in front of the grotto. As the villager was pointing to the well, and describing how he had seen the tiger hurled into it, Tom drew the trigger. The same hand that killed the tiger settled accounts with the betrayer. The *shikarry* "dropped in his tracks." Then, as Tom snatched up another loaded rifle, Edward and the soldier fired, and two of the leading sepoy bit the dust. This somewhat disorganized the others, but ere they could draw back another shot from Tom, and then one from the soldier, laid a couple more low. The amphitheatre was speedily vacated, and the mutineers halted to consider how best to proceed. They were unable to guess how many fugitives were ensconced behind the barrier, and probably magnified the number.

At first they began by firing a volley at the barrier, but the little garrison was prepared, and the bullets only rebounded or

flattened against the stones. Then came another pause, for ammunition was short in the grotto, and they did not care to throw away a shot at long range.

A few of the more courageous of the sepoy then volunteered to storm the barricade. They came dashing across the amphitheatre at the double, and charged up to the barrier.

"By Jove! I expected it. Revolvers, now, lads!" said Tom, hurriedly.

And they did such execution with their revolvers that the stormers could not face the fire long, though even in the short time they held their ground they did sore damage to the defences.

Ted groaned. "Another attack like that and our barricade will fall. And then!"

"And then!" echoed Tom, dreading to look towards Mary, lest the sight of her should unnerve him.

But the sepoy did not repeat the assault immediately. They were reconnoitring, to see if they could not discover some point whence they could attack the little garrison to advantage.

All at once there came a hurried volley from the flank of the sepoy. An answering volley from the jungle followed, and then there was a cheer and the tramp of cavalry at charge; and presently—for the little garrison could see little beyond the amphitheatre—a handful of mounted artillerymen came charging into the open. At the sight of them Tom and Edward pushed down a portion of the barrier and sprang out, rifle in hand, with a ringing cheer. It was answered with interest as the infantry came up at the double with their bayonets lowered.

The sepoy did not wait to receive them, but withdrew in tolerably good order into the jungle, whence they kept up a harassing dropping fire at times, which the rescue-party could not put a stop to, not mustering sufficiently strong to attempt to drive the enemy out of their position.

"We owe you more than our lives, sir," said Tom to the officer in command of the relief. "We could not have held out much longer."

"No, indeed," said Ted; "another assault would have carried our defences."

"We have made all haste," said the officer; "we had no cavalry at our disposal, so we armed some of the horse artillery and made light dragoons of them,—capital ones they make too. And, as the march was a forced one, we put up an infantry man behind every trooper, so that's why I have that company drawn up at the edge of the jungle; they are supposed to be the head

of the column,—and so they are, only the rest of it is some miles behind. So now the sooner we begin our retreat the sooner we shall come upon our supports. Put the lady on one of the horses and mount the two wounded."

And that done, the retreat was commenced.

CHAPTER XXXV.

LOSSES AND LABORS.

AT about half past ten one September morning there came an earthquake on Liverchester.

I do not mean to say that the solid ground heaved, that the steeples shook, and the people rushed forth into the streets in alarm, lest they should be buried in the ruins of their homes. But there was a portentous throe that made all Liverchester totter. The whole city trembled to its fall, and there were but too many men who returned to ruined homes. For one of the largest houses in Liverchester had stopped payment. The firm of Golding Brothers and Glyther had found it necessary to suspend payments. In the crash of their fall they involved the destruction of many smaller ventures.

Golding's Bank was one of the oldest in Liverchester. The Goldings had been provincial Rothschilds from their first appearance on the banking stage. The business had descended from father to son until the time when Mr. Golding, Prudence Harding's late guardian, and his brother George inherited it. Our Mr. Golding—if I may so affectionately speak of Prue's uncle—had never taken any active share in the enterprise, but left it entirely to his brother, on whose death matters fell under the management of his eldest son, a young man, to be sure, but one who had the reputation of being the steadiest and clearest-headed man of business in all Liverchester for his years.

Our Mr. Golding, perfectly satisfied with drawing a large amount of profit from the house in Centre Street, did not interfere with his nephew's operations, having enough to do to superintend his own gigantic mercantile establishment on the East Quay. He had complete confidence in his nephew's judgment and in the stability of the old house. And he was not singular in his reliance on the firm; half the merchants in Liverchester stood or fell by the house, and all the local banking business—the banking firms, in fact, of the whole county—

were involved in the prosperity or misadventure of Golding Brothers and Glyther.

When, therefore, a notice was issued by the bank that, "owing to an unexpected pressure," the house was compelled "to suspend payment for a time," there was a general collapse throughout the whole county.

Men who had driven their mail phaetons into Liverchester on that morning, leaving their wives and families in luxurious retirement at villas in the suburbs, returned home at lunch-time ruined men, without a penny in the world. If Liverchester's commercial prosperity had been a pagoda erected with cards, and the house of Golding and Glyther had been the basement story, the smash could not have been more complete.

And if there was desolation in the homes of the merchant princes of the neighborhood, what, think you, was the misery which the stoppage brought to widows, spinsters, and young helpless children whose all had been deposited in the safe hands of the noted county firm?

Five millions of money! It seems an inexhaustible sum. One is inclined to fancy that such a vast amount would employ us a lavish lifetime to spend. But it took George Golding, Esquire, junior, of The Laurels, Liverleas, but a very brief period to dissipate. But then, of course, if a young and imprudent man speculates largely with other people's money, he may very easily get a prosperous firm into difficulties,—very easily indeed.

It began to be whispered in the provincial circles that young Golding was speculating too largely. Nobody dreamt for a very long time of suspecting the solvency of the bank because he spent more money than he should have done in shares. He was welcome to invest his profits foolishly if he chose, people thought,—for, of course, the property of the bank was untouched. Was not Mr. Golding, the largest and most prosperous merchant in all Liverchester, a partner in the affair, and was it likely he would let the business go to ruin?

However, in spite of all these arguments, there came the morning in September when a humble-minded little notice fluttered on the majestic doors of the business establishment, and half Liverchester was bankrupt. Young George Golding prudently kept out of sight for some time. Ruined people have an ugly way at times of dealing roughly with those who have deceived them, and George Golding was a scrupulously neat dresser. I think his purple and fine linen would have run a chance of being ruffled

uncle. For that worthy gentleman lost in the smash not only his but all his hard earnings, — money he had acquired when prudent, married against his head, in accordance with her made her a beggar.

is the only reason why I mention the bankruptcy of the great mid-county bank exactly. I have said that the central speculation brought ruin to the numerous and small banks of the minor towns. One after another they fell flat like a row of cards, — by a child, when the juvenile gives a slight flip to the first card in the line. P-r-r-r-t! — the swift card flies along the row, and devastates it.

was in one of these banks — in Woodland and Mingay's Bank at Scalperton, particularly — that James and Prudence had placed what little money they had saved together for their children's education. It was not a monstrous sum, but it was their all.

Prudence received the unwelcome tidings early in the morning at breakfast. Prue saw his face as he read the letter, and began to wonder what the bad news was.

"Why, James, what has happened? How gracious, how pale you have turned! What has happened, Prue? Nothing, that we are ruined!"

"How do you mean? Has the bishop —?"
"No, my dear, the blow comes from the other powers. Woodland and Mingay have suspended payment."

"But if they have got our money they can't pay us back. They must pay us back, or we put in."

"I'm afraid we shall recover but little of it. They say they are deeply involved by the failure of your uncle's business. At all events, he has not made much of the money he has robbed you of."

"No, James; but is not this failure of the bank a sort of consolation to us? If my uncle had let me have the money, we could have lost it all the same, and we could have felt the loss more acutely."

"Humph! That's odd reasoning, Prue. I don't agree with the poet that

*"It is better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all."*

after all, you are right. It is better to have been poor than to have had thousands of pounds in Mr. Goldsmith's hands, and enough to lose them than that we have con-
gratulate, Prue, to think that

the store we were setting by for the little folk is irrevocably gone."

"Poor little mites!" said Prue, looking out of the window towards her children disporting on the lawn under the charge of Martha. "Poor little mites! But, thank goodness! they don't feel what it is! They would be far more likely to cry if you mowed away the daisies and buttercups on the lawn, than at all the bank-failures in the world."

James shook his head. This philosophy, he felt, was very well in its way, but, after all, it was not a complete balm for a blow that in plain words meant complete ruin. Fortunately, Prue had been a prudent manager, and in her determination not to lessen the children's little store by a single sixpence, had contrived to avoid running into debt in the smallest way. So that her tradesmen could not press for the settlement of their bills — as they were doing all through the neighborhood — at the very moment when the payment was most inconvenient. Still, the mere loss of the money they had placed in Woodland and Mingay's was not the only injury they suffered. Some of their parishioners suffered severely, and James had immense difficulty in collecting his tithes, while in more than one instance the tenants of the glebe were completely ruined, and he lost his rent.

Now, indeed, Prue regretted that her literary efforts had failed to bring her in any money. How proud she would have been could she but have placed a few hundreds at her husband's disposal, with the announcement she had won them at the point of her pen! But it was not so fated. She knew that it was a vain dream to think of attempting any further essays in that line, so she puzzled and pondered, in the hope of discovering some new way of realizing a little money.

"James, dear," she said at last, after racking her brains for about a week, "I think it would not be a bad plan to advertise for a couple of little girls to bring up with Prue."

"Why, my child, you'd tire yourself to death with such work. Teaching children is such anxious work. No; I think I had better furbish up my scholarship, and take a few pupils."

"We can do both, James. I'm sure teaching little girls their alphabets can't be half so bad as bringing up young men. I'm sure my heart used to ache for poor Mr. Mather, my cousin's private tutor, for he used to lead a life of it."

Finally, it was determined that both plans should be put into execution. It does not appear to be any very terrible sacrifice at

first sight, but it was a very great one. It was the end of all home comfort. Hitherto Prue and her husband had had a little world of their own within the parsonage gates. When they closed those they shut out all worry and annoyance, and found sunshine amid the gloomiest weather in their domestic happiness. By their own fireside they could sit side by side, retired from all petty troubles and cares which could only affect them as the wind did that howled outside. They but drew the closer together, and felt their home enjoyments heightened by the contrast with the trouble without.

Now all this was at an end. The two lads whom James had to prepare for college were fair enough specimens of their class, but they introduced a discordant element, and necessitated a change in the quiet tenor of life at the vicarage.

James had to work very hard now too. He had to read up all his work for them, for a few years of neglect had turned his classical knowledge into a very wilderness, that needed much pruning and training. He was quite able to put the lads into the right way of reading, and could thoroughly prepare them for their earliest examinations. But to help them really in mastering the studies they had to undertake, to give them a sound grounding in the books they were taking in, James had to read hard enough himself. Little did the lads know when they retired for the night that James sat himself down, lexicon at elbow, to prepare his lesson for the next day, and had to struggle with it almost as hard as they did.

In the mean time, too, he had all his parish work to get through; for James was sorely opposed to the notion of a clergyman who neglected his people in order to make money as a tutor. Such a man, he used to say, should have been a college fellow, not a parish priest. So he was, perhaps, over-scrupulous not to allow his attention to his pupils to interfere with his labors in the village. Prue, however, made herself very useful, and undertook a good deal of the less important work. She, too, had her little pupils to look after, but that was not a very laborious duty.

But, altogether, the old seclusion was gone, and with it the old quiet and rest. James had no time now for pleasant chats of an evening. If he had an hour or so to himself, he was so weary that he was glad to fling himself down to sleep on the sofa.

"How long will this last?" Prudence used to ask herself as she sat by the fire watching James's pale, weary face. And

then she would build castles in the air until she too began to nod in the easy chair, until the lads came in from their studies, and Martha came in with the supper-tray. Then was but little holiday at the parsonage now.

Things did not go very smoothly at the Manor-house either. Of course, the squire's property being chiefly in land, he was not seriously affected by the failure of Golding's bank, but he had, nevertheless, lost a great deal more than even a rich man cares to lose in such a way. As a rule I fancy people do not like to lose anything through no fault of their own, and the squire was certainly not more amiable than the majority of his fellow-men. Indeed, I should be inclined to admit that he was considerably less so than most; so that, when he found that he had been flinging his money into a rotten sack, he was furious. It was anything but a pleasant time for any one at the Manor-house for several weeks after the crash. Even Philip, who was down for a few days, was glad to pack up his portmanteau and to be recalled "on urgent business" to London.

Philip had been induced to come down by filial affection. He was anxious, he wrote, to see how his father was, now that he was left *solus*, and having a brief holiday would run down and stop a short time.

"Wants some money, I suppose," growled the squire, when he read the letter. And the squire was not far wrong. Philip of late had several times applied to his father for "advances," as he called them, so that the squire had some reason for suspecting his son's affectionate solicitude for his health.

The fact is, as I have before mentioned, Philip was growing idle. Now that he was Marcus Lysaght's brother-in-law he went into society a great deal more than he had done before. He was looking about for an heiress, he told his sister and father; but in reality it was rather the society of young men of fashion that he affected. He took to sporting, and made a book, which was not a very successful one at all times, for the sort of literature which is most popular among the turf is not quite so easy as novel-writing, and needs great experience. Philip's apprenticeship to the ring cost him dear. His warmest friends fleeced him, for in betting, as in love, a man thinks nothing of stealing a march on his most intimate friend.

A series of heavy losses had rather told upon Philip's finances. He had been more than ordinarily extravagant, too, this year, relying on what he believed to be his "safe pots on the races" to make up for a few excesses. Then, again, his prosperous com-

any had of late become just a suspicion hazy, and salaries were not paid with the accustomed punctuality. No wonder, then, that all of a sudden he became anxious to see how his father's health was progressing. A little tightness in the money-market is a wonderful stimulant to the affections.

When, however, the news of the suspension of payment at Golding's bank arrived at Bremning, Philip saw it was no use to ask his father for any more advances, and when the old gentleman began to make the Manor-house rather more lively than comfortable, he made up his mind and his luggage, and started back to town.

He was all anxiety for employment now, but unfortunately it was vacation-time, and even supposing it had been term-time, he would not have got very much to do; for of late solicitors had discovered that the once industrious and rising young barrister, Mr. Philip Charwood, was not quite so attentive as he had been to his duties. He lost several important cases, and his clients somehow would have it that he had not studied his briefs. And, after all, unless a barrister does study his brief, he can hardly hope to be successful, even by aid of the most brilliant intellect that ever puzzled a jury or bewildered a judge.

Philip determined to make a descent on Marcus, so he wrote over to Ireland to tell his brother-in-law that he had been overworking himself, and wanted a little change of air for his health; might he run over to the Emerald Isle and recruit?

Marcus wrote back to say that, unfortunately, they could not ask him over. His father was in such a dangerous state that his physicians had given him over, and under these circumstances Philip would hardly find a visit pleasant.

"Confounded lucky fellow, Marcus!" said Philip, as he read the letter. "Does n't want money a bit, and here's the old boy popping off to leave him the title and estates, while here am I confoundedly hard up, and the governor's in fine health, and as savage as a bear. Confounded bore that I can't run over to Marcus! I don't like to write and ask him to lend me anything; but I must get the money somehow or another!"

Now, since money, like any other commodity, is always to be had at a price, supposing you don't mind paying (or promising to pay) pretty dear for it, there is no great reason why, when a man like Philip says he must have it, he should not get it.

There was to be met in Piccadilly and the park in those days a fresh-colored dandified gentleman who was on excellent terms with himself, and who had a bowing ac-

quaintance with nearly all the men, and with only a very few, and a very questionable few, of the ladies, that one meets in the fashionable quarter of an afternoon in the season.

He had a nice complexion, dark hair, grayish-blue eyes. He wore neatly curled whiskers and a natty imperial on his chin, and his clothes were faultless in fit and quality, though there was an indescribable slanginess about them. There was a vulgar assumption about the fellow, moreover, as he strutted along, with his hat jauntily perched over his left ear, and with a camellia in his buttonhole. He was always met with a pleasant smile by his acquaintances in the Row—until his back was turned. It was clear that men disliked and despised him, but somehow did not like to offend him:—*nec mirum!* For who but Joe Davison had smashed up that eminent lawyer, Serjeant Marsh, because—so people said—that ornament of the legal profession had once cracked a joke about Moses and money-lending? Both allusions were unpleasant to Joe Davison, whose father had been verger—or whatever the Hebrew equivalent for that functionary may be—at a synagogue in the neighborhood of Whitechapel, and who had an elegant house in a fine street leading out of a fashionable square, with a sort of side-entrance and a species of office, where one might meet some of the greatest swells about town. In short, Joe Davison was a rich Jew, who "knew a party" anxious to lend a few thousands to deserving young men with large expectations.

It was a sign of the growing taste for fashionable life which distinguished Philip that he was now on nodding terms with Joe Davison,—that he was to be seen calling on Joe in his elegant crib in Vavasour Street, and that Joe breakfasted with Philip once or twice,—indeed, had all of a sudden been taken with such an admiration for the rising young barrister that he actually treasured up one or two autographs of his, consisting of signatures written across narrow strips of paper impressed with a government stamp.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CYPRESS AND LAUREL.

THE body of men that had rescued Edward Harding and his little garrison from such imminent peril began their retreat in an orderly manner. But, unfortunately, the brief delay necessary for the removal of

Mary and the wounded men gave the enemy time to reconnoitre, and they soon discovered the weakness of the relieving party. With the odds on their sides the mutineers could be brave enough, and they pressed the retreating troops sorely. The route along which the retreat lay was an intricate and difficult one. It was bad ground, consisting of patches of jungle, with here and there a yawning nullah with rugged and precipitous sides worn by the winter torrents of streams that now slid away mere threads of water in the bottoms of the parched channels.

The sepoy knew the country well, and galled the retreating force with an incessant fire from every point of vantage on either side. In vain did the little body of cavalry push on, while the infantry skirmished on either side to drive the enemy off. The mutineers retreated before their advance, and followed them up as they withdrew.

Anxiously and eagerly did they look for the head of the advancing column, for as soon as that came in sight they knew the sepoy would abandon the pursuit. But in the mean time they were suffering heavily from the fire kept up from every side.

The officer in command was almost beside himself with rage. Tears stood in his eyes—not the womanly tears of fear, but the hot drops of anger and impatience—as he saw his men falling round him, shot down without an opportunity of retaliation.

"By Heaven, I sha' n't be able to stand this much longer!" he said, riding up to Edward. "Will you undertake a dangerous errand for the sake of these brave fellows who pushed on to your rescue?"

"To be sure I will, gladly!" said Ted.

"I want you to push on ahead with our guide there, and hasten up the advance of the column."

The native was mounted on the horse of a slain artilleryman, and he and Edward pushed on under cover of a volley from the infantry.

But their purpose was divined by the sepoy, and many a shot whistled past them as they pressed onward across the open plain which, intersected with dry water-courses, stretched between the belt of jungle they had just quitted and a yet denser forest which lay between them.

Over such ground a light-footed native could almost keep up with their horses, for they had every now and then to pull up and make a circuit round some obstacle which lay in their path. A few of the swiftest of the sepoy pursued them on their left flank, keeping just within range, and firing at them

whenever a check in their course offered a favorable opportunity.

Before they had ridden very far, and while the edge of the forest was some hundred yards off, a shot took effect on the native.

"If I fall, don't stop, sahib; ride straight ahead. You can find your way through the forest by the traces left by our advance this morning, and the troops must be in the plain beyond if they have n't already entered the jungle. I fear I shall not be able to sit in my saddle long; I'm bleeding very fast."

"My brave fellow! stick to your horse as long as you can. We may meet the column sooner than you expect. Shall we halt, and I'll bind up the wound? Where is it?"

"It's no use, sahib. The shot has injured the lungs; I can feel it from the pain of breathing. But I'll cling to my seat while I can, for I will not fall into their hands alive."

The poor fellow's voice grew fainter as he spoke, and he reeled in his saddle. The red blood poured down over his white dress. Ted saw that nothing could save him, and presently, with a stifled groan and a dull rattle in his throat, the gallant native bent forward over his saddle-bow, and fell headlong to the ground, dead.

The pursuers gave a shout of triumph. They had evidently been aiming chiefly at the native, to which fact Edward had owed his safety principally. Now the bullets came singing past him in most unpleasant frequency and propinquity. All of a sudden his horse gave a plunge and reared. Ted was almost thrown from his saddle, but he recovered himself at once, and looking down saw the blood pouring from a wound in the poor animal's neck.

"Good heavens! if it should fall under me before I can reach the jungle!" thought Ted, and a cold perspiration stood on his forehead at the thought.

But, luckily for him, the horse did struggle gallantly on. The wound was not a mortal one, though the loss of blood was beginning to tell on the pace, when, to his great delight, Ted caught a glimpse of the troops coming through the trees.

In a few minutes the soldiers had come up to him. His pursuers disappeared, and Edward found breath to tell the officer in command of the peril in which the advance was placed. Not a moment was lost. On they went at the double, Ted dismounting and keeping up with the head of the column.

Let us now see how the little body he had left was doing.

When they got about half-way across the open they halted and formed in square, with the cavalry in the middle. The men were too weary to retreat farther, and could not return the enemy's fire with any effect. The manœuvre was tolerably successful, but the sepoy, taking advantage of a nullah on their right flank, flung out a body of picked shots, that kept up a telling fire, while protected by the inequalities of the ground from any return volleys. It was necessary to attempt to dislodge this party, so the cavalry charged them. The sepoy retreated along the bed of the torrent where the horse could not continue the pursuit. As they were exposed to the fire from the borders of the jungle, they could not hold the post, so they had to retire to the main body, whereupon, of course, the sepoy returned to the position they had abandoned, and poured a damaging volley into their ranks. At the same time a heavy fusillade was kept up from the jungle, and being thus taken in flank and rear, the little troop suffered severely.

When the charge was proposed, Tom Martindale, in spite of his weakness, insisted on taking part in it. The cavalry were but few in number at best, and as he had taken one trooper's horse, it was but fair, he declared, that he should also take his duty. When the retreat came, and the galling cross-fire was so severe that the only hope of saving a man of them was to give orders to them to set spurs and gallop back as fast as they could, Tom fell a little in the rear, and when the troopers pulled up at the square, Tom was not among them. He had been hit, and had fallen about half-way between the two positions.

Fortunately for poor Mary, she was in the midst of the square, and could not see what had befallen her husband. All her attention, too, was centred just now in her child, for the baby was dangerously ill from cold and exposure,—dying, in fact, as all eyes but hers could read in its face.

Meantime the column with Edward at its head was seen advancing from the wood. The sepoy pushed out supports to their party in the nullah, and it seemed as if there were going to be a pitched battle.

But the officer in command of the rescue felt that the mutineers would not show so bold a front if they did not count on some large reinforcements, and thought it prudent to make good his retreat at once, before his men gave out from sheer fatigue.

Just as all was ready for the retreat, Tom Martindale, whom we left lying in the open between friends and foes, began to recover consciousness, and, seeing his position and the preparations for a retreat, staggered to

his feet and tried to rejoin the troops. In an instant a hundred bullets ploughed up the ground round him. One took effect in his leg and brought him to the ground, but Tom struggled forward on hands and knees, for it was for dear life he was struggling.

On seeing him still alive, several of the sepoy sprang out of the nullah and made towards him with the intention of bayonetting him. But Edward Harding was as quick as they. He snatched a musket from the nearest soldier, and flew to the rescue of his friend.

"Look out, Tom! look behind you!" he shouted, for one of the mutineers was close upon the wounded man with clubbed musket, prepared to dash out his brains.

Tom looked round at the warning shout, and had just time to hurl his discharged revolver at his enemy, with such good aim as to strike him on the wrist as he was raising his gun over his head to strike. Before he had time to recover, Ted had dashed up, and, striding across Tom, gave the sepoy the point in his throat. In an instant a couple more closed with him, but Ted kept them at bay.

Tom meantime had taken his friend's revolver, and with its last undischarged barrel knocked over one of the assailants. There was not a second to lose, though all was done in far less time than it takes me to describe it. Ted saw that to prolong his contest with the sepoy would give the others time to come up, so, without wasting a precious moment in parrying, he drove straight at his foe, received a thrust on his breastplate which luckily glanced off his gorget, and pinned the fellow to the ground. Then, without waiting to withdraw the weapon, he caught Tom up, flung him over his shoulder, and ran back to the main body with him.

"That ought to be the Victoria Cross!" said the commanding officer, as Ted re-entered the square amidst the cheers of the troops.

In another minute the retreat began, and was effected without much loss, the enemy abandoning the pursuit after a mile or so.

By the time they reached Kholaghur the losses had been pretty heavy, for the forced marches had told severely on the wounded, and many of them fell out along the march to die. When they arrived at the fort the surgeons paid prompt attention to the sufferers, who were placed in hospital at once.

Ted had been greatly alarmed for Tom, who seemed to grow very weak, so he asked the surgeon who attended him if the hurts were dangerous.

"Are you a great friend of his?" said the surgeon.

"Almost like a brother," said Edward.

"Then you had better undertake the painful task of breaking the intelligence to his wife. He can't get over it. Want of medical care for his first wound, added to the excitement and fatigue he has undergone since, has made him too weak to get over the shock to the system from the second wound. We have done all we can. The wounds of themselves are not positively mortal, but he is so exhausted he has no rallying power. I don't know whether he or his child will die first, for the poor little thing is sinking too. I have n't the heart to tell the mother, and upon my word I don't know how you will be able to do it!"

"Does Martindale know there is no hope for him?"

"I think he guesses as much, but I'm afraid of the shock, so I sha'n't speak of it yet unless he questions me. He may linger a day or two, for he has a stout heart and a strong constitution; one less tenacious of life would have broken down long since."

"And yet there's no hope?"

"None."

Poor Ted was quite unmanned by this sad news. He could not summon courage to see either Tom or Mary just then, but went away to the quarters that had been allotted to him in the fort, and there in silence went through his agony. It seemed to him as if half his life were going, thus to lose the beloved friend who had become even dearer than ever now for the perils they had passed through together.

In the mean time Tom learned from the surgeon's own lips how near his end was. He had detected a look in the doctor's face that told him of the danger, and he begged him to speak frankly, and tell him if there was any hope. The doctor pressed his hand and shook his head sadly.

"My poor little Mary!" cried Tom, faintly,—"my poor little Mary, and my poor darling baby!"

"Poor little thing!" said the surgeon,—"poor wife!"

And he turned away with a sigh.

Tom lay very quiet for some time. When a man is told that his last hour is near, it is but natural that he should turn his eyes back on his past for a while. There was nothing in Tom's life to make the retrospection bitter. He regretted the estrangement between his father and himself, but he could not reproach himself for its cause. "Ah, if he had known what a wife my Mary would make to me, he would not have said a word against it."

By and by Tom sent one of the hospital

orderlies to look for Edward Harding and bring him to his bedside.

When Edward came, Tom saw that he knew all.

"So the doctor has told you, Ted. Well, old fellow, the dearest and best friend must part, I suppose, for a time. You'll take care of Mary and the baby for me!"

Ted could not speak, but he pressed the wasted hand that he clasped with both of his.

"Does she know it, Ted?"

Edward shook his head. "I couldn't have the heart to tell her, Tom," he said, in a broken voice.

"Poor girl!—perhaps she had better hear it from me. How long have I, Ted! Did the doctor tell you?"

"No, my dear old boy, he said it might be hours,—days perhaps."

"No, not days, Ted! It won't be days, I can feel. I feel so faint that it seems as if I have only to close my eyes and cease to wish for life, and then I should pass away. You'll be kind to Mary when I'm gone!"

"Tom, may I suggest something to you?"

"What is it, old friend?"

"Let me write a letter at your dictation to your father. He loves you very dearly, Tom, and if he thought you did not leave the world in kindness to him it would almost break his heart. And he will be able to aid Mary far better than I, a poor soldier, could do."

"Dear old dad! he must n't think I have forgotten all his long love and goodness. You shall write for me, Ted. Will you do it at once, for I'm afraid after I have told poor Mary I shall be too weak and unmanned. Poor child! the doctors have made her go and lie down, and they have given her a sleeping-draught,—she's worn out with anxiety and terror."

Edward Harding sat down by his friend's bedside and wrote a farewell letter for him to his poor old father. Poor Tom! He could not reproach himself for the interruption of their affectionate relations, but he bitterly lamented that they had parted more coldly than they had ever done before in their lives.

He committed his wife and child to his father's care. He knew that when he was dead his father would be kind to his dear ones, and he told him what a noble, affectionate wife Mary had been to him.

Edward could hardly see for tears how to write the simple, manly words of his dying friend. But at last the mournful task was over. Then Tom begged him to bring Mary and the child.

Mary had just woke up, and was much refreshed and restored. The baby, poor little thing! was looking more like death than ever, — even Mary was alarmed now. Edward brought them to the bedside of Tom and then withdrew.

Of the anguish of that interview no words of mine could give you an idea. I haven't the heart to attempt to describe it. But Tom comforted his poor wife, and at last the bitterness was over for a while, and she was calm, for he was yet with her. She never quitted his side again until the end, or in the quiet watches of the night she felt a faint pressure of her husband's hand. She bent over him and heard him say very faintly, —

"Good by, God bless you!"

And then she stooped down and kissed him, — and it was all over.

Then the anguish and the bitterness returned more acutely than ever, and Mary wrestled with her grief and despair all alone by the side of her dead. And the morning looking in at the window found her asleep beside him she loved, — sleeping the sleep that comes of long weeping. When they woke her she was more calm, but it was the calm that springs of a broken heart. She had wept until she had no more tears to shed; even the news that her child was gone could but add one short, sharp spasm of pain to her aching heart.

She bore up against her grief until she saw her husband and her baby laid together in a grave in the cemetery without the gates of Kholaghur. But after the earth had closed upon her treasures her strength failed her. She was stricken down, and lay for several weeks on the narrow border which divides this world from the next.

Edward Harding, too, now that the dangers were over and the reaction had begun to set in, took a fever, and was in hospital for a couple of months. He rose from his bed a mere skeleton, and the surgeons declared that the only hope of saving his life was to send him home at once. For the mutiny was at an end now, and the British rule preserved in India. So Ted and Mary, with many other invalids, were sent by easy stages in palanquins to the nearest coast, and put on board transports bound for England.

And the same ship that took Ted home bore also a report to the military authorities, in which "Lieutenant Edward Harding, 203d Berkshire Rifles, was especially recommended to notice for his unflinching bravery in rescuing a wounded officer and carrying him off under a severe fire, engaging and killing two of his assailants."

The little bit of bronze for which Edward had so often sighed, and for an opportunity of winning which he had longed and looked so earnestly, was almost within his grasp now. But he did not think of it or care for it much now. He was sick and sore at heart, and would have given all the Victoria Crosses in the world to win back the beloved friend who was sleeping under the walls of Kholaghur.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE RETURN TO OLD ENGLAND.

WEARILY passed away the days of travel for Edward Harding. For poor Mary Martindale they were no worse than any days were, now that all she had prized in life was gone. You would scarcely have known her again, so thin and pale and wasted had she become under her sorrow. Her sorrow was not demonstrative, but the calm was the calm of a heart that was dead, of a life that had no further care or hope or joy in this world. There was a patient but yet wistful look in her eyes, as if she was resigned to her loss, which was but for a while, but yet was looking anxiously for the hour that was to unite her to her dear ones.

One of the first things Ted had done on the death of Tom was to send off the letter which his dying friend had dictated to him for Mr. Martindale. With it he also wrote a letter begging Mr. Martindale to communicate with him as to what could be done for poor Mary. The child, he told the old gentleman, was dead as well as the father, and there was only this poor broken-hearted girl-widow left, — the only legacy his son could bequeath him.

Old Mr. Martindale was growing sorely tired of his position and his life. It was something to have worked himself from a humble position to be an under-secretary, but he ceased now to take any pride in his success. He was a rich man, but what was wealth to him when his son — his only heir — was estranged?

In truth, the old gentleman was breaking fast. He had official worries as well as private afflictions to bear up against. The inquiry into the army-administration after the close of the Crimean War had been a terrible blow to him. He was conscious that, to the best of his ability, he had always done his duty as far as the system would admit; he had, indeed, been the originator of one or two reforms in the system. But when the collapse came, and the exposure of official blunders in the papers followed,

he was hurt to find himself misrepresented. It was bad enough to have the office derided, and all its faults held up to public scorn. But it was infinitely harder to find himself connected with the errors, — to have them, in fact, attributed to him, — by writers in the press.

You see, in a case of this sort, it was necessary to have a scapegoat. That would make it easier for the writers of the stinging leaders, not to mention that an attack on an individual is, of course, always more telling and trenchant than a general condemnation of a system or a body of representatives. So the whole flight of pen-shafts was directed at the permanent under-secretary. The secretary, it was argued by the papers, was a bird of passage who came in with a ministry, and was perhaps turned out by its fall just when he was beginning to master the details of his work; whereas the permanent under-secretary was practically the head of the office, was acquainted with all its workings, and had every opportunity of finding where the system was faulty. Now there was much that was true in this, but one consideration was overlooked. Mr. Martindale had been a clerk in the office himself, and his present subordinates and former fellow-officials regarded all he did with a certain sort of jealousy. They were not, as a rule, enthusiastic public servants. They liked their salaries, and if they did not like the system, at all events they hated change. They had to run in that wretched official groove all their lives, but they were strongly opposed to any alteration in that groove, because it would involve trouble. Least of all did they think they were called on to submit to any innovations dictated by one who was, after all, one of themselves. Whenever Mr. Martindale wished to improve the rules and traditions, he was met by a stolid, stubborn opposition that he could never conquer, and could only very rarely conciliate. He knew from experience that it was hopeless to introduce a regulation, which was absolutely perfect even, in the teeth of this feeling, because the excellence of the regulation would only be proved by its working, and its working would depend on the willingness of the men who had to carry it out.

Even this was not all. His chiefs deserted the brave old boy. They felt that public opinion must have its victim, and they were none of them anxious to appear in that capacity. But here, they argued, was the man who ought to be glad of the opportunity of suffering. He had been promoted by the higher authorities from the ranks, and had a splendid position, and

the least he could do in gratitude was to submit to being the cockshy of the press now that such a sacrifice was needed. This view of the matter was delicately suggested to Mr. Martindale. He did not "concur" (as he generally did in his minutes) with their lordships' opinions, but he was a bon clerk, — he had first walked in red-tape leading-strings, and he knew better than a dispute and make a scandal. No matter how severely he was handled in the press, it was against official etiquette for him to defend himself. If the chiefs of his office were silent, he must "grin and bear it," — and he did.

To be sure, he was given to understand that a title would be the reward of his vicarious suffering. There had been a time when such an announcement would have far more than repaid him for the pain. But a title had no charm for him now, when the dream of his life was gone, and when his son, instead of making a brilliant match, and establishing the family in a place in good society, had married a governess, and taken a commission in a marching regiment.

After the Inquiry was closed, and the reforms it suggested were carried out, in the amalgamation of the departments, Mr. Martindale was, at his own request, and to the delight of those who had made him the scapegoat, allowed to retire from active service. He had reason to regret the step he had taken before very long. Inactivity was very distasteful to him, and he hated the country, so that he could not find employment in looking after his estates. There was nothing to do but to mope about at the clubs, where he was considered rather a bore, because he occasionally made a confidential defence of himself against the late commission, when he caught any one that he could make a listener of.

He had been all his life talking of his hard work and incessant occupation. How often had he described how intensely he should enjoy himself when he was freed from his harness, and could kick up his heels in peaceful pastures, where there were no Estimates and no Mutiny Act, where Clothing Colonels were unknown, and new patterns for gold lace and buttons existed not! Now the harness was off, — but where was the peaceful pasture?

Who invented the proverbial complaint that no man ever obtains his wishes? It's an incorrect saying. A man does not always win his heart's desire, — but it is the greatest mercy that he does not. Better to be disappointed, and enjoy mentally the delights you imagine will be yours when your wish is accomplished. Better to

magine how the rosy apples would taste if they were yours, than to pluck them and find them turn to ashes and bitterness on your lips.

Both Mr. Martindale and Edward Harding have gained objects which they once desired, and how little value are they now that they have them ! When Edward set sail from England for his first campaign, he was worse than a beggar, with a blank future before him. But he had ambitious dreams of a military career, and one lurking longing — one strong and secret determination — to win the Victoria Cross. It was as good as his now, but of what value was it ? I'd rather be the ruined man, with his slender hopes, going out to fight fortune with a brave heart, than this poor broken-spirited invalid going home to receive the threepenn'orth of bronze that he had so longed for. Fame, distinction, promotion, were before him, but they could not turn into a smiling garden the wilderness through which his future lay.

Mr. Martindale had dreamed of a peerage to be conferred on him after long years of devoted service. He had imagined himself wealthy, with a good position in society. And these things had seemed to him the very summit of human bliss. Now they were within his grasp, and what were they worth ? A title that he could not transmit, — which would die with him ; riches that could do nothing more for him than buy him a vault in Kensal Green ; a good position in society, — the society of those who had sacrificed him and libelled him.

It may seem hard to be disappointed in all our hopes, but it is often but a blessing in disguise. If it be sore to bear, it is worse to win your wish and find it is but vanity and vexation of spirit.

Deep was Mr. Martindale's affliction when he heard of his son's death. In spite of their quarrel, he loved his son ardently, and was always hoping he would return. After all he had gone through, he began to think Tom might have chosen the wiser path. What did his notion of supreme happiness turn out to be ? An empty delusion. His son had chosen more wisely perhaps, for affection, after all, thought the lone old man, is worth anything else in the world.

He repented bitterly that he had driven his son from him. He had made the boy his friend and companion. Their relations had been more like those of brothers than of father and son, yet he had expected the lad to bow when for the first time he tried to exert parental authority. Was it wrong, then, to let his son hold so familiar a rela-

tion ? Not a bit ; the wrong was in trying to compel the lad's affections. But for that, and the consequent necessity of trying to oblige him to submit by the exercise of fatherly authority, they might have been friends and brothers to the day of his death.

The only thing the poor old man could think of, to appease his remorse, was to treat his son's widow with all love and tenderness. He wrote at once to Ted, begging him, for the sake of his dead friend and his broken-hearted father, to send Mary home to him, and to endeavor to remove from her mind the unfavorable impression which his past conduct must have made.

There comes a finish at last to the longest journey. Sitting on the deck one sultry afternoon, Edward saw what seemed a line of cloud on the distant horizon. As the vessel plunged forward, beating back a cataract of white spray from her bows, and leaving a long seething ribbon of creamy foam in her wake, the far line of cloud widened and rose from the wave, and presently a fleck of sunlight smote upon it, making a white streak, and by and by it was possible to descry that it had a green crest, and was, in fact, the wall of white cliffs that bounds the southeastern shores of England.

The news that England was in sight had spread over the ship by this time, and the passengers came crowding forward, where Edward was leaning over the bulwarks, to catch a glimpse of the land that so many of them had never hoped to see again. Cripples, who had left that shore in the full possession of strength and limb, hobbled on their crutches to gaze towards it eagerly, and strove to picture the kind faces that would greet them when they touched the land. Men who had quitted England in the glory of health crawled along, pale, wasted ghosts of their former selves, to view her coasts once again, and sigh with relief to think there was their home, where they might recruit their shattered energies. There were tears on many a bronzed cheek that had never blanched in battle, for eyes that could look death defiantly in the face grew dim at the sight of native land.

There was one incident which touched Edward greatly. A poor fellow, quite a lad, who had been blinded by the explosion of a shell, had begged some of his comrades to lead him to the bows of the ship, and, having ascertained in which direction the land lay, was standing motionless, with his darkened orbs turned towards England. If he could not see its shore, he seemed content that the breeze which blew from it should fan his poor pale cheek.

Edward went and reported to Mary that England was at last in sight, and she, too, came forward to look at it. But she was not able to stay long on deck. Thoughts came crowding so thickly upon her as she remembered the time when she and her husband sailed for India, and watched those same white cliffs as they sank below the waves, and twilight came on and the stars started out one by one in the purple vault, before the pale green light of the dying sunset had ceased to linger over the sea where England had faded from sight.

The vessel arrived in port in due time, and Edward, after a rest of two or three days, took Mary up to town. His health was so terribly shaken that the medical man who had charge of the invalids on board the *Osprey* had recommended him to go to London and have the best advice he could get. So he took Mary to Mr. Martindale's, and left her there, thinking it best not to intrude on the melancholy interview which would take place between the mourners. Then he went to consult Dr. Borradaile, the celebrated physician, and was lucky enough to find him in, which was great good fortune, for the doctor was in such request he had hardly time to eat, drink, or sleep.

The physician listened attentively, with a grave face, to Edward's story, and then examined him very carefully.

"Where do you live?" he asked, at last.

Edward hesitated: he had no home. The doctor saw he had made a slip.

"Of course," he said, "you're unsettled just now. I meant did you intend to live in town or country?"

"I hardly know. In fact, I have not given the matter a thought as yet. But I shall go down to see my brother in the country."

"Ah! that's right. What part of England is it?"

"Bremning Minor, near Scalperton," answered Ted; "my brother is parson of the place."

"What! is your brother the Rev. James Harding, who was formerly curate in Liverchester?"

"Yes, he is. Have you ever met with him?"

"No, I have not; but I should be proud to do so, for I have heard from my cousin, Dr. Jeremy, how nobly he behaved during the cholera times. You had better go down to him at once, for you want the quiet of the country, and the attention of those who know what it is to fight against long illnesses."

"What! am I going to be laid up for a

long time!" asked Ted, with a heavy sigh.

"It's better to tell you honestly at once that you are. You have had a terrible shaking, and your constitution is so weakened that it cannot recover. You have no spring in you to recover lost ground, and nothing but perfect rest and quiet can cure you. It is of no use to give you medicines. A generous but prudent diet, a few tonics, tranquillity, comfort, and country air, are the only things that will do you good. With them I earnestly hope that we shall bring you round in time."

Had Ted known more of the doctor, he would have guessed from these words, accompanied as they were by no smile, and with no cheerfulness in their tone, that there was more the matter with him than appeared at first sight. When he offered the fee the doctor refused to take it; he should be ashamed to take a shilling of James Harding's brother. Moreover, when Edward was gone, he wrote James a note, telling him that Edward, though he had not alarmed him by saying so, was in a very precarious state of health, and would need every care and attention to enable him to battle through.

The letter reached James by the same post which brought one from Ted saying he was coming down for a few weeks to recruit his strength. You may be sure there were active preparations made to receive him.

In the mean while, let us watch the meeting between Mary and Mr. Martindale.

When she arrived, Mr. Martindale was from home, so she went in and sat down, not sorry for the opportunity of a little time to collect herself. Mr. Martindale's house was one of those gloomy mansions British grandees delighted in some years back. There was a melancholy cold stone staircase, with dark, heavy balustrades, and a single window to light it, — a window that let in but little light through panes of ground glass, with a border of yellow. When she had toiled up the echoing flight of wide, chilly steps, she was ushered into a dim drawing-room, with sombre furniture, and tall, narrow windows, obscured by heavy curtains.

She had not to wait long; in about five minutes the door opened, and her father-in-law, whom she had never seen, entered in deep mourning. They looked at each other sadly for a moment, and then the old man took her by both hands and drew her towards him.

"Can my daughter forgive me?" he asked in a low voice.

A pressure of his hand was the only

answer she could give. Words would not come, or she would have told him how fondly his son always spoke of him, and how he had taught her to love him. She would have told him that, if he had made her suffer infinitely more, their common grief as they stood by poor Tom's grave would have drawn them together. It was not till some time after, when the strangeness had died out, and when the first bitter keenness of their grief had worn off, that they talked of Tom. At present neither mentioned him; they could not trust themselves to speak of him, but he occupied their thoughts entirely.

"You will not leave me, will you?" asked the old man, thinking that Mary probably would wish to return to her own family.

"I have no home and no friends," said Mary.

"You must not say you have no home: this is your home, and I am your father, my child. You will not leave me!"

Mary did not speak, but pressed his hand. In truth, she felt she could not live in that gloomy place. She must try and find some active and engrossing employment. Here she feared she should brood over her sorrow, and she knew that was unwholesome. Tom had made her promise to keep up a brave heart, and she would be true to her word. But she had not the heart to tell old Mr. Martindale this; he seemed so anxious to make reparation for the past, so desirous of giving his son's widow shelter and comfort and fatherly affection.

So for a time she took up her abode in the old house, looking around her for a task to perform, and trusting that ere long she might find an excuse for quitting a place which, in addition to its inherent gloominess, was full of sad associations; for the old housekeeper, in mistaken zeal, and with the odd fancy some such people have that it is kindness to lacerate the scarce-healed wounds of an old sorrow with perpetual reminiscences of the lost, took poor Mary over the great, empty, echoing mansion and pointed out where the nursery had been, and the little room where Master Tom slept as a boy, with his broken rocking-horse still stabled in one corner. The sight of the toy gave the poor bereaved mother an additional pang, for she remembered her lost child.

Mary had always been fond of and kind to children, and the birth of her own babe had seemed to open such a vista of happiness for her that her tenderness for the little ones grew stronger than ever in her poor hungry heart. One day, while wander-

ing about in the quaint old quarter where Mr. Martindale lived, she strayed into Ormond Street, and for the first time discovered the existence of a Hospital for Sick Children. There was something that appealed to her heart at once in this association of the idea of severe sickness with childhood, and she determined to go over the hospital. At the first sight of a room with a dozen little beds occupied by tiny invalids, the tears came into her eyes, but a moment's thought reminded her that the poor little sufferers were better cared for here than they could be elsewhere, and she saw they looked happy enough, in spite of pale cheeks, with their little trays of toys before them. How cheerful the great rooms looked, and how pleasant were the smiling faces of the young nurses! Here, at last, she had found an employment which would be a simple delight if she only got leave to give her services.

She went home and had a long talk with Mr. Martindale, who was very sorry to hear her determination, but eventually gave way to her wishes.

That night they talked long and late. One of the results of their conversation I must leave for a later chapter.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A BROKEN CONSTITUTION.

WHEN Edward Harding left Dr. Borradaile's house in Savile Row he was at a loss whither to bend his steps. He did not know any one in town,—was not even aware what brother-officers or army acquaintances might chance to be in London.

"I suppose," he said to himself, "if I take a stroll in the Park I shall be sure to meet some fellow I know."

So he turned his face westward, and before long found himself wandering solitary by the rails of the Row. But he met no one he knew.

If there be a place to make a man feel solitary it is the Park, when he knows no one. An endless tide of life sweeps past. Lovely women and stylish men, gentle and simple, high-born and lowly, pass on, and not a single glance of recognition meets the solitary's anxious looks. He is alone in the midst of a vast world. And what makes it the more lonely is that two thirds of the people he meets are on bowing and smiling terms with each other. True, such acquaintances are in reality shallow and insincere enough in the majority of cases, but the solitary wretch pining for a word or look

of sympathy has not philosophy enough to reflect on that. To him it only seems that he is quite alone in the world, and that all mankind save himself are warm friends. Edward was oppressed with this desolate feeling as he sauntered along without meeting a single familiar face. He had never cared for society, indeed, had never had much opportunity of mixing in it, his father having died while he was young, and he himself having spent the chief part of his time at Oxford. At last, to his delight, he saw a face that he knew, — Bella's!

Now I am bound in candor to confess that absence and occupation had somewhat obliterated the image of the romantic young lady from Edward's memory. They had not corresponded, — indeed, Edward had neither written to, nor heard from, anybody since he left England, owing partly to a natural disinclination for epistolary labor, and partly to the uncertainty of his movements and of the posts in India from the interior during the unsettled times of the mutiny. He had long since discovered that he did not really care for Bella; that his flirtation had been aggravated by the opposition of her father, and he entrapped by her romantic folly into a more serious situation than he had intended. Nevertheless, he had always urged upon himself, as he had done in the case of Emily Prior, that he was bound to fulfil his engagement under any circumstances.

But he had never looked forward with any intense satisfaction to seeing Bella again. He was satisfied that they *would* meet again, and that he should marry her according to his promise.

Now, however, when he was solitary in the heart of London, — a Robinson Crusoe desolate amid a multitude, — the sight of a familiar face was very welcome, and Ted bounded forward to Bella with an ardent joy he should never have deemed himself capable of.

Bella was on horseback, escorted by a couple of gentlemen, one being her husband, the Earl of Mountgarret, and the other Mr. Philip Charlwood, who was riding one of the earl's horses, and generally getting as much as he could out of his brother-in-law. They had just halted at the rails to converse with a tall, military-looking young man who was lounging there in the most approved fashion.

Edward did not stop to consider etiquette and propriety. He had seen a well-known face, the first he had encountered since he reached England, and he hurried forward to greet it.

"My dear Bella," said he, pushing rather

unceremoniously past the tall lounge, — "my dear Bella, I am so delighted to see you again!"

Lady Mountgarret drew herself up and stared as haughtily as she could at Edward. The earl stared at Philip, and Philip, who guessed the state of affairs in a minute, gave a whistle of astonishment, and perhaps consternation.

Edward stood for a second irresolute, with his hand outstretched to take Bella's. It was an awkward position; neither the earl nor Philip knew how to act on such very short notice. But Bella was not so easily taken aback. She had rapidly become a woman of the world, — the fashionable world, — and could be rude without much rehearsal. She stared coldly at Edward.

"Excuse me, sir, you are making some mistake. I have not the honor of knowing you," said she, with perfectly collected insolence.

"Not know — what! not know *me*, Bella? Surely, I'm not so altered as that. Me! — why, I'm Edward Harding. You can't surely have forgotten me?"

"I have not the honor," repeated Bella, drawing herself up and gathering the reins which she had thrown on her horse's neck.

"Nonsense!" said Edward, almost rudely. "You are Bella Charlwood, and you can't forget —"

"I never forget anything," said Bella, sharply, "but I have not the honor of knowing you. Captain Vaughan," she continued, addressing the lounge, who was looking on in a state of bewilderment, — "good afternoon, Captain Vaughan. Have the goodness to tell this — gentleman who I am, and explain his mistake to him. Now, my dear," she added, turning to the earl, "shall we take another turn? Come along, Philip."

And so her ladyship cantered off, leaving poor Ted utterly prostrated by her impertinence. Nor were the earl and Philip much less surprised at her audacity.

"Cool, upon my soul!" said Philip, *sotto voce*.

"Cool! I consider his conduct insolent!" said my lady, giving her horse a smart cut with her riding-whip as a relief to her feelings. Philip had not intended the word to apply to Edward's conduct, but to his sister's. However, he did not think it worth while to correct her mistake, but merely said once more, "Cool, upon my soul!"

"Egad! she is a fine woman!" said the earl to himself, as he set spurs to his horse and followed his wife and Philip. "Egad! she is a splendid woman! I wonder if I ought to have interfered, or what was the right thing to do under the circumstances!"

Edward and Captain Vaughan were left staring blankly at one another. The latter, as might be expected, contrived to collect his thoughts first.

"Not a very courteous introduction, sir," said he, raising his hat, "but I am glad to know you. You mentioned your name — Harding — of the 203d Berks, I presume?"

Edward bowed.

"Allow me to shake hands with you. I was reading about your Victoria Cross exploit this morning, and I assure you I am proud to meet you."

"It's very kind of you to say so; but where did you read it, may I ask?"

"Where? Why, in the *Times* this morning, of course!"

"The *Times*! What do you mean? I don't understand."

"Good heavens, man!" said the captain, carried away by surprise, "don't you know that you were gazetted this morning for the Victoria Cross?"

"I have not seen the *Times*; indeed, I'm so out of the habit of looking at papers that I never thought of opening it, though it was on the table at breakfast at the hotel this morning."

"Well, you certainly are the coolest hand I ever met with. You take the news of your having got the Cross as if it were an every-day occurrence."

"I have had so many things to think of latterly that I'm afraid I am getting a little callous. But I am, in my way, very proud of the distinction, I can assure you, Captain Vaughan. It was one of my dreams of ambition to win the Cross, but I never expected it would be realized. Now, when it is —" Edward sighed and paused.

Captain Vaughan misunderstood the cause of the sigh.

"I hope you're too old a soldier to break your heart for a woman."

"O, it's not that! But you remind me, — pray explain this late mystery. Was not that Miss Charlwood you were speaking to when I came up?"

"Well, — no; it was the Countess of Mountgarret."

"I never saw so strange a resemblance."

"You don't know, then, that the Countess of Mountgarret was a Miss Charlwood?"

Edward started. Although he did not really love Bella, but, on the contrary, was delighted — when he reflected — that she had liberated him from a duty he was not anxious to perform, still he could not repress a certain feeling of vexation and pique at the idea that she was another's.

"Who is this Earl of Mountgarret?" he asked his new friend.

"Well, it's only an Irish peerage. You may have known him as Marcus Lysaght."

Edward shook his head.

"He was the close friend and constant companion of her brother Philip, — the other fellow who was with her just now. You did not know him?"

"No, I was only acquainted with the father and daughter. She and I had some romantic love passages many years ago. But that was all over. I was only glad to see her because it was the first face I had seen that I knew."

"Are you all alone in town, then?"

Edward answered that he was, being en route for his brother's.

"Come and dine with me at my club. It will be something to do, and even my company will be better than none at all. Say yes!"

Edward accepted the offer, put his arm through that of his new friend, and, after a few more turns, sauntered off with him to his club.

"A word with you," said a gentleman to Captain Vaughan, as they met for the second time.

"You'll excuse me a moment?" said Vaughan to Edward, as he drew aside with his friend.

"Vaughan," said his friend, who was, in fact, no other than Mr. Gawaine, the eminent surgeon, "who is that with you?"

"A new chum, doctor. Harding, the Victoria Cross who was gazetted this morning."

"He won't live to wear it long, let me tell you. That's why I asked you. He has death written in his face!"

"You don't say so!" said the other, distressed. "I don't know much of him, poor fellow! but he's a fine chap, and I'm sorry you speak as you do, for I believe you're never wrong, Gawaine."

"Not often. But you had better tell him that if he wants to live he must take great care."

"He's going to dine with me to-day, and I'll take the opportunity to advise him."

"Give him some of the best and soundest champagne you can get, and don't have any peppery French or Indian messes for him, unless you want to shorten his life. Good by."

Vaughan did not fail to keep his promise, and told Edward after dinner that a friend of his, a medical man, seeing Ted with him, had remarked how ill he looked, and how much care he should take of himself. Ed-

ward told him of his interview with Borradaile, and Vaughan fancied that, for once, perhaps Gawaine was a little too quick to perceive danger. He and Edward parted that night much pleased with each other, and determined to renew their acquaintance ere long.

Lady Mountgarret had seen the two walking arm in arm as she cantered back along the row, and gave an angry little sneer, and snubbed her brother in consequence.

"We shall have to drop Vaughan, my love," she remarked to her husband, as he lifted her from the saddle when they reached home. "He was walking with that Harding, who will no doubt fill his head with all sorts of opinions about us."

"Very well, my dear," said the easy-going nobleman. And from that time Captain Vaughan was exiled from the Mountgarret festivities, for which he did not particularly care, having many other friends.

Edward, before he and the captain turned into the club, went to a news-vender's and despatched a number of the *Times* to his brother James. Next morning, accordingly, as James was sorting the letters which came in the bag, he found the *Times* addressed to himself in Ted's hand.

"Heyday! What have we here? Ted sending the *Times*! I suppose he thinks we never see the papers down here, which, by the way, would very likely be the case, but for your taste for newspaper reading, Markwell."

Markwell was the son and heir of a wealthy manufacturer at Birmingham. He was reading with James for Cambridge, and was allowed all sorts of luxuries, — even the *Times* at breakfast.

"Perhaps there is some news in it he wants you to see. He may have been promoted," said young Lechmere, who was being prepared for the army.

"O, I hope it is so, James," said Prue, who was presiding at the breakfast-table.

James Harding opened the paper and searched it through to see what Edward's object could be.

"Ted's name is not among the promotions, at any rate," he said, as he glanced over the *Gazette*, "so it is n't that." Just at this moment, however, his eye caught the name of Harding in another column. He looked, and saw the paragraph was headed, "The Victoria Cross."

"Her Majesty has been pleased," he read, "to bestow the Victoria Cross upon Lieutenant Edward Harding, of the 203d Regiment, Berkshire Rifles, for distinguished acts of personal bravery in rescuing a wound-

ed brother-officer who was left on the field for dead during a skirmish with the *mafi-neers*."

The paragraph gave a brief account of Ted's exploit, not omitting his first rescue of Tom after the attack on the boats.

I need hardly say that both James and his wife were in a high state of glee at this news. Their gladness was a little shaded presently when, on coming to read their letters, they found the one from Borradaile. Then they learnt from Ted himself that he might be expected down that day. James's pupils were delighted, as such gallant young English gentlemen ought to have been, to learn the good news, and to find that they were to have a real Victoria Cross man among them in a few hours.

The hours were counted that day at the parsonage, you may rely upon it, and the studies were but perfunctorily done. Even if James himself could have applied himself to his work heart and soul as he usually did, he could not have found fault with the lads for a noble enthusiasm which unfitted them for their labors. They would stop in the middle of an intricate problem or a difficult chorus from *Æschylus* to ask some little question about the reward "For Valor," and then a discussion of the subject would spring up and continue until James, recollecting himself, would bring them back to book.

At last the evening came. There was no pony-carriage now to send for Ted; that luxury the poor parson had been compelled to abandon long since; but Farmer Harvey's gig was at James's disposal, and Thomas, who was still retained to attend to the garden and make himself generally useful, was despatched in due time with the vehicle to meet Edward at Scalperton.

Many an anxious look was bent towards Carpray Lane, and many a time did the eyes at the parsonage strain to catch a glimpse of the gig's return through the chestnut boughs.

Edward, in the mean time, was spinning rapidly along from Scalperton. How changed — like his life — was the scene from the time when he last saw it wrapped in swathes of cold ghostly mist! Now it was bathed in warm golden sunlight, the long shadows of the lofty elms stretching far across the meadows, and the milkers abroad in the pastures, with the last lark twinkling over them. The home-bound starlings whirled overhead in dusky clouds, and the rooks slowly flapping their big black wings sailed towards their nests, uttering at intervals a sort of valedictory caw. All these thoroughly English sights were

full of sweet recollection and present charm for Edward. Almost before he was aware of it they had reached Carptray Lane, and were spinning down hill towards Bremning, under the broad-leaved branches of the chest-nuts.

What a warm greeting it was at the parsonage gate! There stood Prue with little Mary in her arms, and Prue the second, in whose juvenile mind mamma had been striving to revive memories of Uncle Ted, nestled by her side, half hiding her face in the folds of her mother's dress. There, too, was James, looking sadly careworn and troubled, but with a face full of joy, nevertheless, at meeting his brother again. Behind were James's pupils, whose appearance, by the way, puzzled Ted at first somewhat, until James explained, whereupon Prue said, smilingly, that she too had a couple of pupils, but they were in bed, as Prue and the baby would have been but for the expected arrival of their uncle.

Poor Ted was sadly knocked up with his day's journey, so he was glad enough to escape as speedily as possible from the attention of the admiring lads and fling himself down on the sofa in James's study. Prue, having despatched the little folks to bed, came in and drew a chair up beside him, and pressed him to take some refreshment, James also joining in her entreaties.

"It's very good of you both, but I could n't touch anything," said Ted. "Somehow, I never have any appetite now, and I am so absurdly weak that I get knocked up with the least thing."

They soon had reason to know how weak he was, for they presently got into a quiet talk, and Ted was so distressed at hearing of their losses, and so grieved to think that they were due to him, and that he had had so much of their money for his debts, that he became quite hysterical, and it was with difficulty that they soothed him.

After this Prue was afraid to speak of Bella, but Ted, getting calmer, began to talk about her of his own accord, and, not without some anger as well as smiles, told of their meeting in the Park. Prue was very angry at her former friend's heartlessness and insolence, but she was glad to see that Ted was not suffering acutely on Bella's account. They continued talking for some time, until at last the excitement of it told upon Ted's weakened powers, and he sank away into a dead swoon. This seriously alarmed James and his wife, and they agreed that Ted would be better in bed. They hoped next day he would have recovered from his fatigue.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

BEQUEATHING THE CROSS.

THE next day poor Edward, instead of getting better, grew worse. The worry of travelling, the excitement of seeing old faces, and the reaction, now that he was home again, all combined to aggravate his illness. It seemed as if the strength of his constitution had been so reduced that it only served to bring him back to die among his own people.

In spite of all Prue's devoted care, and in defiance of Dr. Borradaile's tonics, he grew feebler and feebler every day. He could scarcely creep from his bed to the easy-chair by the fire, for, though it was a warm autumn, the poor fellow suffered so from cold that they were compelled to have a fire in his room night and day.

James became seriously alarmed, and wrote to Dr. Borradaile describing his brother's symptoms. It would be useless, he felt, in an emergency like this, to call in the local medical man, who was able to draw a tooth or make up a rhubarb pill fairly enough, but was hardly to be trusted to do battle with Death when it came in such a form as this. It was no shame to him that he should not be able to do so. He was but a junior officer in the service, and could not fairly be expected to act as commander-in-chief in a campaign against so experienced an enemy. It is almost a pity that the healing art has not its priests and deacons as the Church has. The credit of the profession would suffer less than it does now, when people, without reflecting, call in a lad fresh from the hospitals, and fancy he is as thorough a representative of English medical skill, and expect as much of him, as though he had given half a lifetime to the study of that most complicated and wonderful of all machines, the human frame.

Dr. Borradaile's reply to James was not an inspiring one. He was coming down the line on the next Sunday to see a nobleman who was a patient of his, and he would run on and see Edward in the afternoon.

Dr. Borradaile's was no easy life. To say nothing of his liability to be called on suddenly, at all hours of night or day, to attend cases of emergency, he had a regular scheme of daily labor, more than enough to satisfy a glutton for work. He had his gratis consultations from seven till nine, his ordinary consultations from ten till one or two, his visits in the afternoon, his hospital in the evening, and his studies at night. His studies were no light ones, for he labored till late and tried various experi-

ments, some not less perilous than the one which cost poor Toynbee his life. "What right," some shallow people may ask, "has a doctor to expose his life to such dangers as are almost suicidal?" You do not complain of the soldier who faces almost certain death in the endeavor to save a comrade, and surely you cannot blame the surgeon who risks his life for the welfare and preservation of whole armies of his fellow-creatures!

The devotion of Borradaile to his profession was a splendid thing. He knew, without vanity, that few men in the profession had as great experience, as great knowledge, and therefore, though he had made a fortune, and was no longer young, he did not retire. He did not even practise gratuitously, from a nice sense of fairness to his brother medical men, though to the poor and the needy he gave more than his services. As to the people who could pay, he argued that they naturally would get advice if they could for nothing, and would therefore come to him if he practised gratuitously instead of going to others who charged—and needed—fees. But if he took the guineas of the rich, he gave them freely to charities, to hospitals, and in other directions, where the poor were most readily and liberally relieved, without regard to creed.

At the end of the week he visited Bremning Minor, and saw Edward. It scarcely needed Borradaile's experience to see that Ted could not weather the winter. He gave directions for a host of little cares that would relieve the sick man's sufferings, — a hundred minor things that would alleviate the weariness of illness as well as the pain.

"We can't even hope to save him, my dear lady," said he to Prue, when she spoke wonderingly of this minute forethought, — "we can't even hope to save him, unless the world turns back and we have summer again instead of winter. If that were so, it would be only a very slight chance indeed, — with winter to come we have not even that. But we can smooth the weary path of sickness, and a long experience of sick-rooms has taught me a number of things that would not occur to those who have not had that experience."

James tried to press his fee on him, — and a big fee it was, for he had come many miles to Bremning. But the good doctor refused the money.

"My dear sir," said he, smilingly putting back the little packet, "it would be a downright robbery. I came nearly as far as this to see old Lord Carnbrey, who has nothing

on earth the matter with him except the fidgets and laziness. I make it a rule to compel him to pay heavily for robbing me of time I ought to be giving to real and urgent cases of illness. His lordship has had to draw a check which will more than doubly pay for this trip, and I can't in honesty take a penny from you."

This was said in such a frank, laughing way that James could not be offended, and was obliged to take the fee back, without suspecting that Borradaile had noticed or knew that there were hard times at the parsonage.

Hard times they were indeed, for James had to give up his pupils, and Prue had to send her little folk away for a holiday, because the house must be kept quiet. And there were all sorts of delicacies and dainties wanted, for poor Ted was not long in acquiring the sick man's appetite, which is a morbid craving — though a quite unconscious one — for things that are equivalent to gold, — grapes at Heaven knows what a pound, and chickens, and ice, when they can hardly be procured for money, much less love.

James and Prue stinted themselves sorely to get these luxuries for Edward, who knew nothing of the difficulty they had in supplying his costly tastes. Ah, how poor Prue wished now that her novels had sold! She was almost tempted at times, while she was sitting up with the invalid, to take her pen again, and see if there were not something to be won by it.

So the autumn wore on. The woods turned from green to gold, from gold to russet, and the woodland paths got deeper and deeper in dead leaves. The swallows, with multitudinous chirpings, made their great assembly on the roofs, and betook themselves to warmer climes. The mists gathered in of an evening, and when first the morning broke there were sparkling patches of hoar-frost on the lawns and in the meadows.

The curtains were closed earlier and earlier each evening. The daylight grew shorter and shorter, and dimmer and dimmer, and in the long nights the rain sobbed and the winds moaned until those long nights seemed even longer to the wakeful watchers in the sick-room.

And still poor Edward grew no better. Dr. Borradaile came down to see him twice, unasked. He made excuse that he had been to Lord Carnbrey's, and had just run on. But in truth Carnbrey had taken his imaginary ills to the Continent, and was spending the latter end of the year in Paris. But James did not discover the kindly fable.

Borradaile had been fighting a desperate battle. He knew what terrible siege the winter would lay to the ruined fortress he had to defend, and his only chance was to throw in supplies, so he was giving Edward the most powerful tonics, in the faint hope of carrying him through the cold months.

But his second visit told him that all his labor was in vain. He told James of the struggle he had made, and of his failure, and bade him prepare to lose his brother. It was a sore trial for poor James, and scarcely less so to Prue, who was tenderly attached to Ted, not only because he was her husband's brother, but for his own sake, and because she had been his friend and confidante in his love troubles, — a sure guaranty for a woman's sympathy and regard.

The winter was deepening around them fast now. The trees were stripped of their leaves, and the flowers were fast waning, — so fast that Prue found it difficult to supply the little glass which poor Ted liked to see full of flowers on the table by his bedside. Luckily, Prue had all her faithful school-children to rely on. She had only to tell them that she wanted flowers for the sick-room, and if there were any to be had within miles they would get them for her. But still bouquets became scarcer and scarcer, and as they became scarcer the sick man's strength faded away too. The snow had fallen once or twice, and hushed the earth in its white shroud, and chained the rivulets.

And then Edward felt that he should not live to see the spring. The consciousness grew upon him in the weary, long nights when the watchers by his bed believed he was asleep; but he was only lying quiet with closed eyes, wondering if death was anything very different from this.

When James, at Dr. Borradaile's request, began to warn his brother that his life was despaired of, he found that Edward had learnt that truth of Nature herself, and was quite prepared.

"I know, Jim! I know what you're going to tell me. Don't put yourself to the pain, old fellow. My sick-leave will be over sooner than the medical board expected when they sent me home. And — there, Jim, give me your hand. We must all part some day, and I'm very glad I'm going home."

That same afternoon, when Prue came up, as she was accustomed to do when the children were having their after-dinner sleep, Ted called her and her husband to his bedside.

"Sit down, there's good people, and tell me all about yourselves. I have been sick

and selfish since I've been here, but I'm better now, and I want to know all your doings."

They sat down on the edge of the bed, one on each side, holding his hands. There was silence for a little while, but by degrees they fell into a low whispering talk, and opened their hearts to each other, and Edward learnt all their troubles and trials.

"And you suffered all this for me and for Bella, when neither of us deserved your care. I should like to live now, if only to try and repair the wrong."

"It was no wrong, Ted," said Prue. "We loved you too dearly to mind a little suffering, if we could only have kept your charge safely."

"You brave little woman!" said Ted. "She should have been a soldier, Jim, to win the cross you and I used to talk of."

"And you have won!"

"For no greater a deed than yours, Prue. What I did, I did for love of Tom Martin-dale. But how have you got on with the squire since?"

They told him.

"Then you have never had that money restored to you?"

James shook his head.

"What a shame! And this, then, was the reason why you took pupils. I wondered that you should do so, for I've heard you say you did not think it right for a man with a parish to take pupils."

"Not if he neglects his parish for them, Ted," said Prue; "but James has not done that."

"At all events I have had a very energetic curate, Ted."

"A curate?"

"Yes; Prue here has worked as zealously as if she was seeking a title."

"You both praise me too highly. I don't deserve it. I have only tried to do some of my duties as a wife because I neglected one."

"Which was that?" asked Edward, smiling.

"It is a wife's duty to have no secrets from her husband, is it not?" she asked.

The two brothers laughingly assented. But Prue was not joking, she was taking an opportunity to rid herself of a secret that had been a sad burden for a long time past. She told the story of her authorship, related all her worries with the publishers, the appearance of her novel, and the swindle of Mr. Mudsill.

Edward and James were astonished, James especially, for he had never for an instant suspected that his wife's writing had been of a literary nature.

"Well, Prue, I used to think you were very often puzzling over the bills, but I fancied it was because you were trying to keep down the expenses, with our narrowed means. I never dreamt you were an authoress. You might have sent me a copy of the novel."

"And have heard you condemn it, ignorant of the pain it would have given me. No, I had not the courage."

"Yet she had the courage, Jim, to go and fight those publishing fellows, and to put herself at the mercy of the regular critics with their tomahawks. No courage to send you a copy! Well, you must be something more terrible than all the publishers and all the reviewers together."

"So he is, for he is my husband, and I could not have borne to hear him blame my poor effort to swell our scanty purse."

The two men looked at her in silent admiration.

They had faced danger, these two. James had fought his hand-to-hand battle with death in a terrible form in the cholera times at Liverchester. He had breathed the breath of pestilence, and taken fierce fever by the hand. He had faced trouble as unflinchingly as he had faced death. He had, in the pursuit of duty, given up himself entirely, had suffered loss, and had worked with stern determination to repair it without departing a hair's-breadth from the path of duty and honor.

Edward had looked death in the face, too. He had fought gallantly, and he had performed a deed of heroic devotion that fairly won him the coveted Cross of Valor, to say nothing of his bravery during the siege at Ungawallah, or of the daring with which he rescued the little party that had escaped from the massacre on the river.

But these two men felt that their gallantry in going out against active danger was not so grand a thing as the quiet endurance of the brave little woman who had gone through trials and troubles, and attempted—ay, and performed—tasks of difficulty they would have counted insurmountable.

We men are very apt to talk about "lords of creation," the "weaker sex," with a variety of set phrases which are universally recognized, but which are utterly erroneous. We are bold enough and lordly enough with a noisy danger,—something that we can have the excitement of a struggle against, but we cannot passively endure the torture which the "weaker" sex can bear unflinchingly. And yet that is the more difficult part to play, that passive part. For instance, take the case of a rickety gig with a

skittish horse being driven along a mountain road, with a precipice on one side. Most people would prefer, of the two occupants of the gig, to be the driver. He has, at least, the partial control of his fate, and the excitement of straining every nerve to avoid the perils in his path. The other must sit perfectly still, must not disturb his companion by a nervous action of alarm, must not lay his hand on the rein, or say a word. In most cases this is the woman's part in life, and she acquits herself nobly in it.

"Jim," said Edward, "do you remember that talk we had in your study, a long time ago, about the threepenn'orth of bronze?"

James nodded assent.

"I remember you said that you'd give half you possessed to win it."

"And you, Ted, declared you would win it, and you have kept your word."

Ted put his poor wasted hand under his pillow, and drew out the scrap of metal with its bit of ribbon. He laid it on the bed in front of him, and they all looked at it in silence, with full hearts.

"There, Jim," said Ted, at last, "there's the threepenn'orth of bronze we were both so proud to think of, so anxious to win. After all, though it seems such a valueless thing, it is worth I can't tell how much. We can't be certain—I can't, at any rate—that what I have done would have been done if I had not known there was such a cross."

"You wrong yourself, Ted. I don't believe you thought of it."

"I hope not; but my knowledge that there was such a reward may have influenced me,—at all events, lays me open to suspicion."

James shook his head.

"Ay, you may do that, but I believe even you have possibly stirred yourself to stouter endurance and sterner struggles by dreaming about this. You knew of it, and longed for it, and it is possible that your inner self has said, 'I can't win it, but I can deserve it,' and so you have fought on. We knew of it, and, unconsciously, perhaps, have been influenced by it. But Prue, I believe, never thought a bit about it till she heard I had got it."

James thought it likely.

"There it lies, then, Jim. We have done our best; but can that count with her bravery?"

And he took up the cross and laid it in Prue's lap.

"For Valor, Prue!" he whispered in a faint voice, and then, exhausted with the

excitement of talking, he sank back on the pillows.

It was the last flicker of the expiring lamp of life. As Prue and her husband sat watching Ted, who lay for a few minutes with closed eyes, breathing heavily, they saw he was trying to speak.

They bent over him. His eyes opened for a moment, and as he pressed their hands he murmured, "Wear it for memory of me"; and then the eyes closed again, the grasp relaxed, and Prue and her husband were alone in the room.

CHAPTER XL.

SUNSET AFTER RAIN.

THEY buried Edward Harding under the great yew-tree in Bremning churchyard. It is a pleasant, quiet resting-place, — God's-acre, where his children sleep peacefully under the canopy of his blue sky, more glorious than the grandest cathedral roof ever raised over king or hero. The green fields stretch away on all sides of it, and in summer there is a choir of larks always chanting matins and vespers.

They laid him in an unassuming grave. A simple stone records his name and the dates of his birth and death, and there is a little medallion above on which is carved a representation of the Victoria Cross.

The stone is visited with great solemnity and awe by those lads of Bremning who have — as most boys have — an early fit of martial longing. They tell wonderful stories of Edward's doings in the Indian Mutiny, attributing to him all the acts of bravery they hear spoken of or read about.

The simple villagers as they wind up along the church path of a Sunday, while the bell is summoning them with its clear treble, pause as they pass the grave, and read the inscription for the hundredth time, and give a sigh.

The clerk points it out reverently to any visitors who may secure his services to show them over the church. Even Bella Charlwood, — I beg her ladyship's pardon, the Countess of Mountgarret, — I am told, regards the resting-place of Edward Harding with respect. She speaks of him very kindly as an old friend of her family, and says how much they regretted his untimely death, for he was such a nice person and a very promising young officer.

You see, while he was alive he was an inconvenient acquaintance, but now that he is dead, and was decorated with the grandest of our orders, civil or military, her lady-

ship finds it desirable to speak warmly of his friendship. She even displays a little of her old romantic spirit about him, and tells people they were brought up as children together, and relates all sorts of anecdotes about his youthful prowess which have no foundation save in her fertile imagination.

The earl, I fancy, is beginning to get rather tired of her ladyship now. They have no family, and she is very fond of running about on the Continent, which he, being of an indolent disposition, does not care about.

The earl's temper was not improved, I fear, by the discovery that the estates had been considerably "dipped" during his father's lifetime. It must be rather trying to a man's temper to discover this when he is at the same time conscious that he is blessed with a wife who is anything but economical.

As for Philip Charlwood, his brotherly desire to share his purse (which was empty) with the earl, on condition that the earl should return the compliment with his, was novel, but not agreeable. His noble brother-in-law got out of temper with him one day, and told him that he had enough to do to supply one of the Charlwood family with all the money she wanted, and that he had no intention, when he married Bella, of wedding her brother's fortunes or debts.

Philip found that his friend Joe Davison was speedily acquainted with the coolness between the earl and himself, and Joe's friendship cooled too. Funds therefore ran short, and what was more, Joe would not renew. In his despair, Philip reduced his expenditure, sold off a lot of luxuries, and went back to his chambers in the Temple, and looked out for briefs. But, alas for Philip! clerks had brought briefs to that door until they were tired of reading that "Mr. Charlwood was out of town on important business." So briefs found another channel, and when Philip went into court he saw fresh faces, and there was a Mr. Sebright who was doing all the business that had been his, and his quondam brother-counsel — that is, those whose position was such that he had deigned to associate with them — had got drafted off to county-court judgships, or recorderships, or appointments of some kind or another. He tried to move the paternal heart, but, the paternal coffers being low, he failed to move it to any solid benefit. Meantime things began to grow unpleasant. He received a quiet hint from his banker that he must not overdraw. Davison threatened him with arrest. His tradesmen had little bills to settle, and wanted his small account.

Philip took the hint. He went off for a week to the Continent, and has never since returned. He haunts the German gambling-places, where he fixes himself on young Englishmen, to whom he relates the ingratitude of his family, his brother-in-law, and the world at large, — to whom he relates also that, having won enormously, he intends to return to England, and pay off everything, and start afresh, and whom lastly, though not leastly, he fleeces.

The squire has heard of his doings through some kind friend, and has disowned him. All his unentailed property will go to Bella, therefore, — and that before very long, I fancy, for the old man gets sourer and sourer every day, and must shortly die of his own acidity. The servants all dread him, and keep out of his way as much as possible. The villagers shun a meeting with him, and, as for the children, they fly at the sight of him. This is not a pleasant existence. The only enjoyment he gets he obtains by distraining for rent, which he does ruthlessly the moment it is at all in arrear.

Mr. Golding, Prue's uncle, came to London, where he obtained a position as manager of a joint-stock bank. The venture was not a very successful one, and at last a few over-inquisitive shareholders insisted on scrutinizing the way in which business was done. They found that owing to the ignorance, carelessness, and incompetence of most of the directors, and with the complicity of a few, the manager had been buoying up a rotten scheme by transactions which were, in point of fact, neither more nor less than fraudulent. He was taken into custody, and eventually committed, but the jury acquitted him as being rather an instrument in the hands of a few directors than a felon on his own account and for his own purposes. But the result was social ruin as far as he was concerned. He struggled on for a short time as a promoter; an office for which a man does not require, as a rule, either capital or character. But he must have experience, and that Mr. Golding wanted; so, after launching a few bubbles only to see them collapse immediately, he vanished, and — so it is reported — betook himself to Australia, where he started sheep-farming. His house in Liverchester has been converted into a bank, far more prosperous than the once famous firm of Golding and Glyther. George Golding, Esq., junior, late of the Laurels, Liverleas, who had been the managing partner, is stated to be somewhere in the same quarter of the globe as his uncle. He is reported to have turned out, in the hands of a govern-

ment official, to be a very clever rascal-mender. He is liberally supported by the whole British community, in consideration of his having ruined a portion of it. His meals are regular, his labors not excessive, and his uniform is yellow.

I know very well that this is not as it should be in novels. But I have desired rather to make this a reflex of real life than a properly composed three-volume fiction. Some of my villains certainly have come to grief, but it seems to me as if it was their own doing, and due to no improper interference on my part. There is one sort of justice that awaits ill-doers, — one punishment that haunts them. It is necessary that they should never let themselves be found out. If they once suffer themselves to be seen in their true colors, justice and punishment await them. If they can only hide their roguery decently, — even with a Coan veil (provided it is never lifted), — there is no reason that I know why they should not die universally lamented and respected, and have a handsome monument raised over them. If Philip Charwood had not let the world, through Davison, find him out, he might still be figuring among the fashionables. If the Goldings had not permitted themselves to be detected, they would not now be breathing the pure atmosphere of Australia.

It is time, perhaps, to turn from the consideration of the rogues to the honest folk again.

In the quiet hospital in Great Ormond Street, with the lofty, clean, cool rooms and the pleasant garden, with the rows of tiny cots, and the tiny patients lying in them, you will find Mary Martindale. "Nurse Gentle" some of the children have christened her. As she moves about with a calm, sweet smile among the little ones, visitors do not suspect that she carries a broken heart about with her; but she finds a balm for her own sorrow in lightening that of others. Many and many a blessing is showered upon her, many and many a prayer breathed for her by grateful mothers, — poor women who underwent the great pang and let their children be taken from them to the hospital out of feverish alleys and streets, because they knew it was for their children's good, and who rejoice to hear the little ones prattle of Nurse Gentle, and know they have a mother's care, though they are separated from them. In this peaceful and blessed path of duty Mary will tread while her time is appointed on earth. Some day, when they come to rouse her, they will find that Nurse Gentle is beyond human waking, and that all that is

ft of her is the frail, worn body over whose still heart the thin hands are clasping two locks of hair, — her husband's and her child's.

Not long after Ted's funeral Mr. Martindale called upon James. He had come down from London specially to see him, and they were closeted together in the study for a long time.

It was a sad interview. The old man was utterly broken now. He implored James's forgiveness for thinking so ill of him for his kindness to Tom. He was so rumbled, so despairing, to find that he had lost all that made life pleasant for the sake of worldly show that was worthless, and had sacrificed his beloved boy out of the desire for the good opinion of people who had not scrupled to make a victim of him for their own aims and ends, that James felt quite ashamed to have this fine old gray-headed gentleman abasing himself before him, and he talked wisely and kindly to him until poor Mr. Martindale fairly wept, and then, his heart relieved, was better than he had been for long.

"But I must tell you my errand, Mr. Harding. I am a childless old man. My daughter, Tom's widow, though she has entirely forgiven the wrongs I have done her, does not care to live with me. She has felt herself called upon to undertake a task which will divert her thoughts from her own bereavement. It was scarcely to be expected she would have cared to live with me. Then I hoped that your brother, who knew, and, I believed, liked me, would consent to take his friend's place, — would be a second son to me, and let me take a father's interest in him. At all events, I hoped he would let me try to prove my gratitude to him for saving my boy from falling into the hands of those wretches. Alas! all my best intentions are thwarted. Had my ill-doings but failed thus, I should not be childless and solitary now! I find I have only come to visit your brother's grave, and breathe my unavailing thanks over his coffin. You must let me find a friend in you. Take pity on a gray-headed, wretched, lonely man; suffer me to put to a good use riches that have no value for me unless they enable me to be of service to the brother of one to whom I owed so much."

James's first impulse was to decline the offer, and say that he was quite well enough off; but he could not say so without hesitation, and Mr. Martindale saw that what he said was not true. He pressed his offer so kindly and so delicately, that it seemed rather as if he were asking James to confer a benefit on him.

Finally, he did not know exactly how, James found himself confiding all his cares and troubles to Mr. Martindale as freely as if he had been his father. Prue, coming in presently, — not knowing the old gentleman was there, — was drawn into the conversation too.

The upshot was that, after all their pinchings and privations, better days dawned for the Hardings.

Mr. Martindale offered them a living he had in his gift in the West of England, but James preferred to stay and continue the good work in his old parish. Mr. Martindale stayed with them for some time, and was not long in discovering that the squire was one of James's bitterest thorns in the flesh. He set himself quietly to see if he could not remedy the evil.

He found that the old man had lost considerably by the failure of Golding and Glyther, and had great difficulty in holding his own; so he set a clever lawyer at him, who contrived to talk old Charlwood over into selling the estate. He had no son to inherit it, and his daughter would be better pleased with the money invested for her sole benefit. The squire liked the idea, and the sale was effected.

Mr. Martindale was the buyer.

All had been done so quietly that the squire's removal to town took every one by surprise. I believe the old rascal sneaked away for fear they should ring the bells in their joy at getting rid of him.

What was the surprise of James and Prue when they received orders to move into the Manor-house, and found that Mr. Martindale was the new squire, and intended to take up his abode there permanently.

Different times had come now for Bretning Minor. It was picturesque still as it had been in the squire's best days. But the picturesqueness was not that of ruin and decay. The wretched old cottages were replaced by roomy, well-ventilated new ones. The poisonous brook was purified and flowed sweet and clear through the village, for the new squire had a properly arranged system of drains made.

The only people who grumbled now were some of the farmers. They had lost their old despotic power over their laborers. Whenever they were guilty of any acts of petty oppression the squire was sure to learn it, and they heard of it again. Mr. Martindale was an old disciplinarian, and he managed his people as he had managed his office. He was kindly and considerate, but he had no mercy for wrong-doers. If a tenant of his was guilty of injustice to his poorer neighbors, he received notice to quit,

and he had to quit, for the new squire never revoked orders.

So in time the village got purified of the hard men who had come there as if drawn instinctively towards Mr. Charlwood. They went away by degrees, to carry a blight elsewhere. New and enterprising men came in their places, and there was always a good demand for labor, and no niggardliness about wages.

A happier village than Bremning Minor you would not find throughout the length and breadth of England, — indeed, I fear you would find only too few like it.

Prue the second and little Mary grew up to be graceful girls, and were old enough to be the proud nurses of a little brother Tom, who was born presently. They were only amateur nurses, for Martha Ogleby still retained her old post until Master Tommy was old enough to run alone. When he had arrived at that mature age, Martha explained, with considerable circumlocution and confusion, that she was very miserable, but she was to be the happy bride of the gardener who had succeeded Thomas. She so balanced her misery at leaving with the bliss she looked forward to with the man of her choice, that it was impossible to say how she could have made up her mind to change her state except by tossing up.

To her unspeakable delight she was told that she and her husband should be installed at the lodge, so that she would still be near her mistress and children. Under these circumstances, Martha's future was one of unalloyed brightness, and a more contented bride, with a broader smile of undisguised delight, never walked up the aisle of the church of Bremning Minor.

And if she was happy as a bride, Martha was happier still as a wife. The lodge had a back entrance to the stables, and a corner of the stable-yard was apportioned to it for washing purposes. It was an understood thing that the lodge-keeper's wife was to do all the washing of the Manor-house. I need hardly say — for I hope my readers by this time know Martha's little weaknesses — that this prospect opened up a steamy vista of future happiness to our old friend. Imagine an endless succession of soapbuds and fluttering lines of linen, — an everlasting state of rolled-up sleeves and pale, crumpled fingers, — an unchanging future of pattens, steam, slop, boiling-coppers, pegs, and clothes-props. Martha's wildest dreams had never pictured anything like this. Nor was this all. Martha had another worship besides washing, you remember. Here, too, she was blessed. Every year, as

became so orderly and methodical a person, she presented her husband with a baby, each baby, in turn, being the most wonderful child the world ever beheld. Such mottled arms, such marvellous fingers, such eyes, such downy heads, such early teeth! James declared that he did not see how the list of English Christian names, male and female, could supply such a family, the run on its capabilities was so severe. But they all grew up and prospered. The boys were put to various occupations, the girls were all brought up by the mother to be good servants, good wives, and especially good washerwomen. On washing-day there was always to be seen a row of tubs, with Martha and her girls up to their elbows in suds, — a nicely graduated row, beginning with Martha, and ending at that one of the smaller girls who could, by dint of a stool and a pair of pattens, be brought to something like a level with her tub.

There is sunshine, then, flooding Bremning Minor. The autumn is just beginning, with cloudless skies of intense blue. The hedgerows are rich with autumn blossom and fruit, — sweet with the fragrance of egg-lantine, and bright with bramble-berries. The hillsides are dark, velvety green, and here and there on the slopes are stretches of yellow, waving corn, like squadrons of cavalry with gilded helms charging across the meadows, with bright poppies for crimson flags.

The great grave kine are standing in the pools under the shade of the willows. The brooks swollen by the rains, that make all around look so freshly green, babble among their pebbles or roar into miniature cascades. And the golden sunlight floods the whole scene.

There are twinkling drops on the boughs and on the blades of grass. For a shower has lately passed, — the gray cloud that bore it is yet hanging a dim slanting curtain along the distant horizon. But the present is but the fairer for the bygone rain, — a myriad of diamonds, purer than the diamonds of the mine, for they have been cradled in the bosom of the blue heavens, are sparkling on every side.

So do past tears, purified by faith and noble endurance, become jewels that make brighter our present happiness. The best gold is that which has been longest tried in the furnace, and that heart is most golden which has learned in suffering a sympathy for others, and feels a grateful rejoicing in the blessings which are permitted to lighten and relieve the cares of life.

James and his wife stand arm in arm under the boughs of the dark yew that

reads above Edward's grave. They are looking up the slopes, but their eyes take heed of the scene. They are fixed upon the past.

There is sunshine over Bremning Minor. There is sunshine on the hearts there. But the sun shines upon graves in Bremning, and upon recollections of the dead in those parts.

Because there is no repining, the dear ones are not forgotten. Standing by the grave, with the sun streaming round them, they are gazing, not on the grave, but beyond it. They know they shall meet the beloved dead again hereafter. They have

something to live for, something to die for. The memory of a great sorrow hallows life, as the shadow of the yew lends a deeper gold to the beams that pour over the grass where no shadow lies.

And as they stand by Edward's grave, James and Prudence cling closer to each other, but they do not speak. Their hearts are communing together, and drinking deeply of the peace which comes after trouble bravely combated and suffering nobly undergone. So it is that in Prue's heart there is peace, and on her heart reposes the little bronze cross with the simple inscription, "For Valor."

THE END.

THE

3

MEMBER FOR PARIS:

A Tale of the Second Empire.

By TROIS-ETOILES.

Murray, Eustace Place. Greenville.

"A force de marcher l'homme erre, l'esprit doute,
Tous laissent quelquechose aux buissons de la route,
Les troupeaux leur toison et l'homme sa vertu."

VICTOR HUGO.

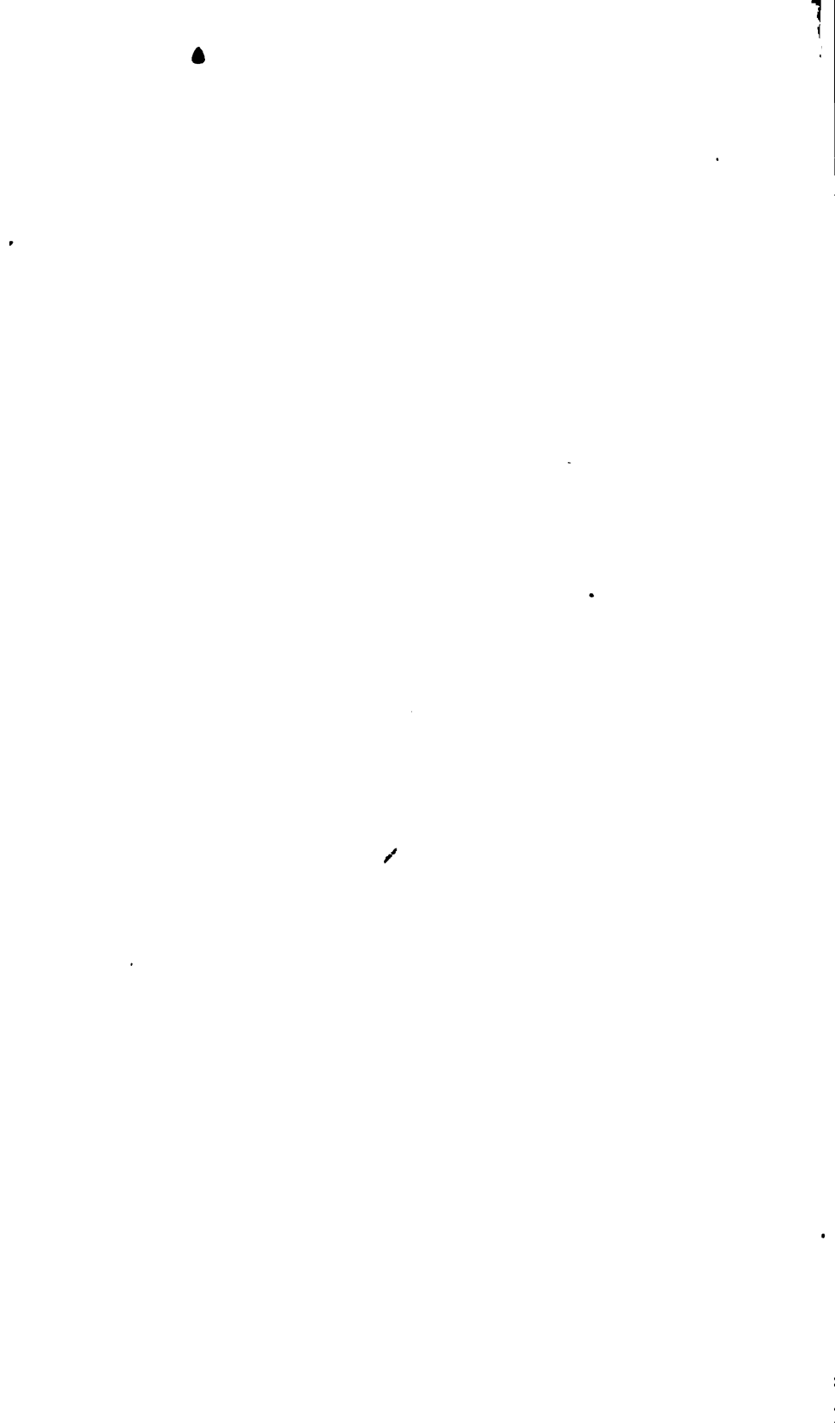


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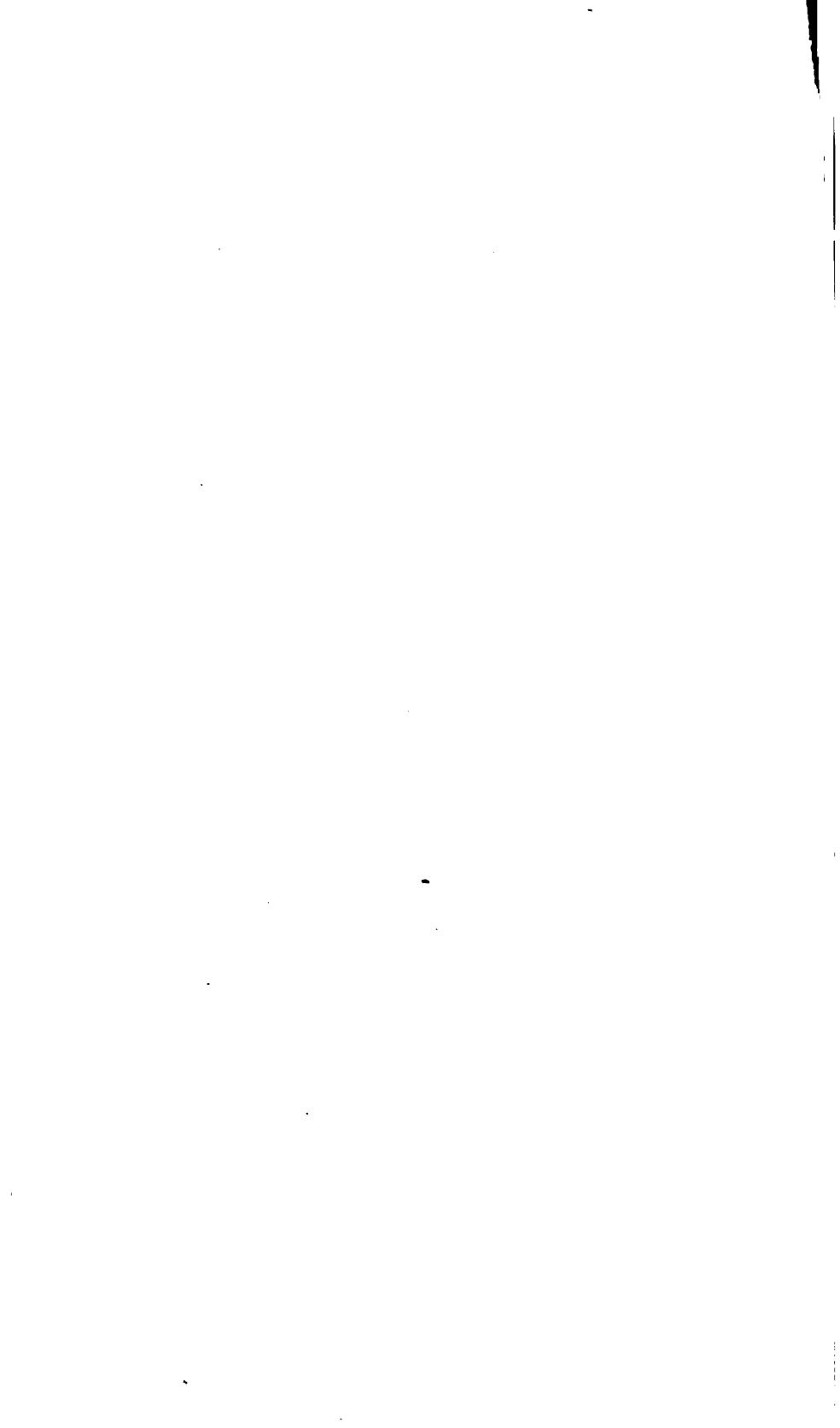
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THE MEMBER FOR PARIS.

CHAPTER I.

CE FUT UN DEUIL DANS LE PAYS.

HAUTOURG on the Loire is a venerable old town, which played an important part in French history some six or seven hundred years ago, when gentlemen wore plate-armor and cut each other's throats by way of pastime. If we may trust the legend, it originally formed part of the fief of a mighty Count Alaric, who, being a disloyal subject and in league with the Devil, thrashed his king, Louis le Gros, in a field adjoining the town, which Providence and the municipal council between them have since appointed for a brick-kiln. If you turn to Froissart you will find that a Count de Hautbourg fought behind John II. at Poitiers, and was in the train of that ill-starred monarch when he rode through London on a tall horse, having his vanquisher, the Black Prince, beside him on a small one. Three centuries and a half later, another Count de Hautbourg turned up in the Bastille, where he had been put for being a Jansenist; and in 1793 a certain Raoul-Aimé, Marquis of Hautbourg and Clairefontaine, was heard of on the guillotine, where he perished, it seems, with remarkable good grace and equanimity. I am not going to weary you with a long account of what the Hautbourgs did in exile during the Republic and the reign of Napoleon; but if you are versed in contemporary history you must have read all about that Marquis of H. and C., who accompanied Louis XVIII. to Hartwell, married in England Mary-Anne Sophia, daughter of Ezekiel Guineaman, Esquire, and died, under the Restoration, a duke, a peer of France, and a secretary of state. To him succeeded his eldest son, who was also a peer of France, but never a minister, and

who figured as one of the leaders of that "anti-dynastic" opposition, which made the life of poor Louis Philippe so extremely unpleasant to him. This nobleman being in Paris in 1851, at the time when Monsieur Bonaparte, as he called him, effected his *coup d'état*, was so unfortunate as to take a walk in the afternoon of the 3d December, at the precise moment when the emissaries of the said Monsieur B. were most intent upon their work. Finding himself suddenly face to face with a troop of M. de Goyon's horse, whose mission it was to clear the streets, he made an attempt to fly — the first attempt of the kind, be it said incidentally, that he had ever made in his life. But well-mounted dragoons are not always so easy to fly from. You will remember that on this occasion the brave defenders of order had been liberally plied with wine, and had received instructions not to spare anybody who stood in their way. These instructions they obeyed; and so it befell that the noble scion of the Hautbourgs, who entertained about the same feelings towards democracy as he did towards pitch, came, thanks to the grim irony of fate, by the death of a democrat. For, when the slain were picked up on the evening of that glorious day which slew a republic and founded a dynasty, the Legitimist duke was found lying side by side with a subversive sweep, a costermonger of socialist tendencies, and a small boy, three feet high, who must have been wicked beyond his years, seeing that out of his bleeding, perverse little hand was snatched a red toy-flag emblazoned with the heinous words, *Vive la Liberté!*

Some three years after this, that is, in the year 1854, the time at which this narrative commences, the domain and castle of Clairefontaine, about two miles distant from Hautbourg, had not yet been visited by their new master. The estate, which dur-

ing five and thirty years had teemed with splendor, animation, and festivity, now looked as if a sudden blight had fallen upon it. Grass had begun to sprout over the stately avenue, a good mile long, which led from the lodge-gates of the manor-house to its principal entrance. The shutters of the castle were all closed and barred. The stables, in which the last Duke of Hautbourg had stalled six and twenty horses, were deserted. The handsome little Gothic chapel, one of the sights of the country, in which it was reported that Fénelon had once preached, and in which it was a certified fact that his Majesty King Charles X. had been several times to mass during the visit he paid to the first Duke in 1827, was become a home for spiders; and — worse sign than all — the monumental fountain standing in the centre of the state courtyard — fountain built on the designs of the famous sculptor Pierre Puget, and covering a spring from which the manor drew its name of Clairefontaine — was overgrown with moss, thus revealing that its dolphins and naiads had long ceased to dash spray out of their open mouths and horned conchs into the porphyry-basin under them. Had it not been for the unsightly ruins of an unfinished summer-house, which had evidently been begun in the late Duke's time, and abandoned to the mercies of wind and rain at his death, one would have fancied it was full a hundred years since anybody had trod those leaf-strewn alleys and silent chambers. Now and then in the very early morning, or in the evening towards sunset, an old crone was to be seen painfully mowing with a hand-sickle the long grass on the lawn, or gathering peaches, apricots, and cherries in the orchard, or picking lapsuls of roses and pinks from what had once been the flower-garden; but she partook more of the phantom than of the human being. If questioned, she would tell you that she was the lodge-keeper, and that she gathered the fruit and flowers to prevent them being wasted. She was a rather dismal old woman, with a querulous intonation of voice, but — like all French people of either sex — she was ready enough to talk, and would spin her quavering yarns by the hour when interrogated civilly. "She had no idea," she said, "when the new Duke was coming; she believed he lived in foreign parts. Somebody had told her that he was an odd gentleman — not mad, Monsieur, she didn't mean that, but queerlike in his ways. No one had ever seen him at Clairefontaine since he was a little bit of a boy just so high; no, he hadn't even come to M. le Duc's funeral, which was thought strange, and had made folks about the country talk a

little, though our Holy Virgin forbid that she should find any thing to say concerning a gentleman who was a Hautbourg and certainly had good reasons for all he did. But you see, sir, despite her being an old woman, she couldn't help hearing what people said, and then as talked said that Monsieur, the new Duke, had not been very well off before, and that it was peculiar he shouldn't have come to the burial of a relation whose death had brought him a million francs a year. Ay, Monsieur, it was full a million, if not more. All the land from Hautbourg to Clairefontaine, from Clairefontaine to Boisfroment and Clairebourg, and from Clairebourg to Sainte-Sophie, belonged to the estate. To judge of the size, one should have seen all the tenants assembled, some three or four hundred, on horseback, as she had seen them when Monseigneur, the late Duke, came of age, and when 'Monsieur le Roi Charles Dix' arrived on a visit with Monsieur le Duc d'Angoulême and Monseigneur le Duc de Quelen, Archbishop of Paris. Ah, that was a sight to see. That was! but, mon Dieu, those times were far gone, and men were no longer now what they were then. In those days she was a young woman, and her husband, who was head-gamekeeper, had loaded his Majesty's own gun when there was a battue in the preserves. He was paralyzed now, her husband, but he had been 'a brave;' he had served as sergeant in the Prince of Condé's army at Coblenz along with the first Duke, who was Marquis then; and he had lived in Monseigneur's household upwards of forty years. There was no head-gamekeeper now, in fact no gamekeeper at all, and the estate was managed by a new agent, M. Claude." Was he a kind man, this Monsieur Claude? — "Oh, yes, sir; she couldn't but say he was kind enough; he was a quiet-spoken gentleman from Paris, and never hard to the tenants. But, after all, Monsieur" — and here the old woman's voice would wax more querulous and whimpering — "it wasn't the same as having M. le Duc here. The country had been all dead like for the last three years, and she had heard tell that if this went on much longer half the folks up at the town yonder would be ruined. You see, sir, they used to live on Monseigneur, they did, and the new Duke's keeping away was no more nor less than taking the bread out of their mouths."

This account, gloomy and piteous as it might sound, was yet cheerful in comparison to what one heard in the town itself. There the closing of the Château of Clairefontaine and the protracted absence of the new Duke were viewed as public calamities; and one had only to walk along the

tortuous old streets, and mark the dejected faces of the shopkeepers, to guess that unless M. le Duc put in an appearance very shortly the old woman's prediction about the *gazette* was not unlikely to be realized. As we said at starting, Hautbourg was a venerable town, but it had had its day, and it could no longer afford to do without patronage. On each side of the main street, which was called *La Rue de Clairefontaine*, the sign-boards and devices over the shops (for sign-boards are as much in vogue in French provincial towns as they were in England 150 years ago) testified abundantly, that, spite of revolutions and noble principles of equality, the relations between borough and manor-house were as feudal as they had ever been at the best of times. Over the crockery-dealer's was the picture of a young person standing beside a bubbling fountain and handing a mugful of water to a knight in plate-armor, with underneath the words: *Au Chevalier de la Claire fontaine*. Over the ironmonger's was another knight in plate-armor, dispensing what appeared to be shovels and tongs to his menials, and exhorting them to be "*toujours prêts*," which was the motto of the Hautbourgs. Over the pork-butcher's was a Hautbourg slaying a wild-boar; over the gunsmith's a fourth Hautbourg firing off a culverin, and so on. Of course the chief inn was the Hotel de Clairefontaine, and its rival over the way, the Hotel Monseigneur; and equally, of course, there was in the midst of the market-place an equestrian statue of the Hautbourg of Crécy, with a long homage in Latin to the valor of that warrior.*

The Dukes of Hautbourg had always done their very best to foster in the borough a spirit of dependency, and with the greater success, as the town, having no manufactures to support it, and being situated neither on a river, nor in the vicinity of a large canal, nor on the trunk-line of an important railway, possessed none of the elements of modern vitality, and would probably have dwindled away into a village had it not been for the great family at Clairefontaine. It was to this family the town owed every thing. Its schools, its free library, its museum of stuffed birds, its restored church, filled with furbished brasses and stained-glass windows; its restored gate, out of which the Count Alaric had proceeded when he went to beat Louis VII., and on which still bristled a spike, where it was assured this same Count used to spit the heads of his subjects who were behind-

hand with their taxes; * its quaint fountain and horse-trough in the street near the cattle-market, its red-brick almshouses and free dispensary, — all these institutions had been built, founded, or renovated with Clairefontaine money. Furthermore, the late Duke, with a view to keeping up his territorial influence, had spent annually some four hundred thousand francs in the town. All the necessities of life in the way of furniture, food, and clothing, both for himself and servants, and many luxuries also, which a less politic nobleman might have bought in Paris, this far-sighted landlord purchased at Hautbourg. He even went the length of wearing in Paris coats cut by the Hautbourg tailor, and of suffering none but the Hautbourg doctor to attend him in illness — acts of courage these which entailed their reward, for I honestly believe the two facts combined did more for the popularity of the Duke, and for the self-esteem of the borough, than if Monseigneur had caused Hautbourg to be raised to the rank of a first-class prefecture, and had brought a cardinal-archbishop to reside there. But this was not all. The establishment at Clairefontaine was not only an ever-flowing source of profit in itself; it also acted as a great central planet around which gravitated a number of satellites, in the shape of smaller country-houses, occupied by the lesser nobility and gentry of the department. So long as the hospitable doors of the castle remained open these lesser gentry abounded. Harvest-festivals, archery-meetings, hunting-parties, masked-balls, and charity-fairs, followed each other in unbroken, edifying succession. Not a small purse but endeavored to vie with the big purse: hall played the suit of castle, and villa returned the lead of hall; the whole summer and autumn season was a carnival, and the direct result appeared in this, that the trading-men of Hautbourg grew fat, their wives and children waxed ruddy, and the borough in general wore a sleek and prosperous look, such as speaks of plenty, and savings in the funds.

All this, however, was a thing of the past now. The eclipse of the great planet had involved that of the satellites, and Hautbourg was fallen of a sudden from its snug position of ease into penury, the more hard to bear as it had been unexpected. The Hautbourg of 1854 was but the ghost of the Hautbourg of 1851. Can you fancy Capua ravaged by a pestilence, Pompeii become bankrupt, or Herculaneum abandoned just previous to its interment? There

* This statue was erected at the Restoration, the original one standing before 1789 having been melted down under the Republic, one and indivisible, to coin peace with.

* I ought to mention that there were some who insisted this was only the remnant of an ancient weather-cock, but there are unbelieving people everywhere.

was not a carriage to be seen in that neatly-paved serpentine Rue de Clairefontaine, in which, of a fine autumn afternoon in the good times of the late Duke, the local quidnuncs had often counted as many as a couple of dozen vehicles, come in for shopping, and drawn up in a long queue outside MM. Blanchemelle and Camisole's, the linen-drappers, or Madame Bavolet's, the *modiste* from Paris. MM. Blanchemelle and Camisole and Madame Bavolet had always prided themselves upon keeping pace step for step with the fashions of the capital, and it was certainly to their credit that their bills were, if any thing, rather heavier than those of the Rue de la Paix; but, alas! where were they and the fashions now? MM. B. and C. were advertising cotton-checks cheap, and a humble placard in Madame Bavolet's window informed you that bonnets were to be had within "first style" for fifteen francs! It is curious what a single blow with a dragoon's sword can do. The unsuspecting pimple-nosed trooper who cut down Monsieur le Duc, had at the same stroke ripped open the money-bags of a whole borough, dispersed the denizens of some score of mansions, and mowed away the prosperity of twenty square miles as completely as if it had been so much grass. I need not tell you how popular he was, this pimple-nosed trooper, in Hautbourg; but I think he would have spent a pleasant quarter of an hour if the municipal council could have had the dealing with him for fifteen minutes in private. Nevertheless, I am bound to say there was some one against whom public opinion was yet more incensed than against him, and that was the new landlord—the new Duke of Hautbourg. After all, the dragoon had acted in ignorance; he was a brute, who was paid to do his work; and as for the Monsieur Bonaparte who had paid him, why, you see, he had become Emperor since, and so the less discussion about him the better. But what was to be said for a man who had come into a million francs a year, a colossal estate, a magnificent name, and who yet hid away in some hole-and-corner foreign town, and never condescended to show himself? I ask you, what was the good of being a Duke, if one did not stand forth and show one's self? The law ought to put a stop to dukes who did not show themselves. Their being suffered to hold land was nonsense; it was immoral, and the sooner they were compelled by statute either to relinquish their money or to spend it like gentlemen, the better it would be for everybody. Such were the discourses that were uttered in Hautbourg; and if you would like to hear what else was said about the new and mysterious owner of Clairefontaine, you have

only to step in and listen to the conversation held one evening after a very sorry market-day at the *table d'hôte* of the chief hotel in the place.

It was at that critical moment in the repast when the boiled beef had been removed, and when the company are waiting, silent, to see what is coming next.

Farmer Toulmouche, wizened and small—a fine specimen of a French farmer nourished on lean pork and red wine—poured himself out half a tumbler of *ordinaire*, diluted it with water, and mournfully ventured upon an observation.

"I never see such a market-day in all my life," he said. "This very day three years ago I sold twenty beeves—no more or less. To-day I sold never a one."

"Nor I," dismally echoed Farmer Truchepoule, an agriculturist of rather bigger calibre. "Never a one."

"Oh! don't let's talk of past times," protested M. Scarpin, the local bootmaker, dejectedly. He had come to dine at *table d'hôte* to raise his spirits a little; for trade had not been very brisk at home that day, and Madame Scarpin, according to the worst of lovely woman, had made him bear the penalty of it.

"No, don't let's talk of past times," assented M. Ballanchu, the seedsman, with a sigh; but he instantly added, "When I think of that Duke skulking away like this, and allowing every thing here to go to rack and ruin, *par tous les cinq cent mille diables*, it makes my blood boil."

M. Ballanchu was a fat man, and when his blood boiled, after an invocation to the five hundred thousand devils, his countenance reddened and was ferocious to behold.

"Of what duke are you speaking?" asked young M. Filoselle, the commercial traveller, whetting his knife against his fork with a view to the roast veal which Madeleine, the servant wench, was just then bringing in. This was only M. Filoselle's second visit to Hautbourg. On both occasions, he had found a prodigious difficulty in screwing orders out of the "beggary" town, and he saw no reason whatever for standing on ceremony.

"Why, the Duke of Hautbourg, to be sure," answered M. Ballanchu in astonishment. "Whom else should I mean?"

"Ah, yes, I remember," proceeded M. Filoselle, trying the edge of his knife on his thumb. "You did nothing but talk about him last time I was here. Well, hasn't he turned up yet?"

This levity disgusted M. Scarpin, the bootmaker, who communicated to his neighbor, M. Hohepain, the tax-gatherer, that those Parisians were growing more and more

sumptuous every year. Unfortunately, this remark was lost upon M. Hochepain; for, besides being deaf, he was at that moment immersed in profound speculation as to who would get the veal kidney.

It was Farmer Follavoine, the replica picture of Farmer Toulmouche, who undertook to answer the traveller.

"Turned up!" he rejoined bitterly. "No, and never likely to. Why should he turn up? His agent collects his rents for him regular; and so long as them's all right, I don't suppose he's going to care much whether us here goes to the deuse or not."

"I know I shouldn't — not two pins," remarked M. Filoselle pleasantly.

"Do you take stuffing?" called out M. Duval, the landlord, from his end of the table.

"I should think he did; he takes every thing," ejaculated the stout Madelon — the person alluded to being M. Hochepain, the tax-gatherer.

"If I were you," said M. Filoselle, shaking the pepper-pot over his plate, which was by this time full of roast, and grinning approval at Madelon's sally, — "if I were you, I shouldn't sit down and pull faces all the year round, as you seem to be doing. If you want to see your Duke back again, why don't you — Madelon, my angel, the bread — why don't you draw up a petition and have it off to him with a deputation?"

"What good would that do?" asked M. Scarpin contemptuously.

"Not much, I am afraid, *mon pauvre* M. Scarpin, if it was you who headed the deputation; for your Duke might think the jaundice had broken out here, and people who are rich don't like the jaundice; but if you sent somebody with a more cheerful face on his shoulders, something might come of it. After all, though," pursued the collected M. Filoselle, "it depends on what sort of a man your Duke is. In my experience, there are dukes and dukes. I once knew a duke who was no higher than Madelon's waist there, *par exemple*; he wasn't so stout. We travelled together on board a steamboat going down the Rhine — you don't know the Rhine, M. Scarpin? It's a splendid river, *couleur café au lait*, with a bordering of sugar-loaves on each side. The duke was standing abaft blowing away at a cigar. Said I to him, 'Monsieur le Duc, it is the mission of great men to patronize the arts and manufactures. I am travelling for three world-famed houses: one in the drapery way, another in the musical instrument line, and the third in the wine-business. I also take subscriptions and advertisements for two newspapers — one democratic, the

other conservative. If you will honor me with an order for a flute, and put down your name as subscriber to one of the papers, you will encourage native industry and promote the development of journalism.'

"'Monsieur,' he replied dryly, 'I am not a great man. I don't play the flute, and I think that journalism is a great deal too much developed as it is;' and with this he turned on his heel. *Ah, diable!* that's what I call a sharp duke; and if yours is like him, I agree with you, it wouldn't be much use petitioning. But" —

"Go to, saucy *farceur* from Paris!" interrupted M. Ballanchu wrathfully. "You're all of you alike with that cursed habit of smiggering at every thing. I tell you it's not a matter to laugh at, that a whole town should be going on to ruin, because a crotchety old man, who has had all the good blood in him poisoned by that infernal city of yours, chooses to hide away and hoard up the gold he ought never to have inherited. I tell you, we country-folk whom you Parisians turn up your snub-noses at are a precious sight better than you. Do you hear that, young whippersnapper? Bad luck to you, one and all!"

"Hear, hear," chorused Farmers Toulmouche, Truchepoule, and Follavoine, who had an unmitigated contempt for Parisians. They had never seen Paris, either of them, and didn't wish to.

M. Filoselle was not the least abashed. He had just finished his veal, and was occupied in mopping up the gravy in his plate with some bread-crumbs. This operation completed to his satisfaction, he raised his eyes towards his interlocutor, and said, "Monsieur the Seedsman, my birthplace is not Paris, but Dijon. I first saw the light in the city renowned for its mustard, and I beg you to observe that my nose is of the aquiline order of architecture. As for the old gentleman with the crotchets, who had his good blood poisoned in Paris, I should like to hear something more about him; for he must be an interesting phenomenon to study."

M. Ballanchu growled.

"Come, come," interposed M. Duval, the host, in a spirit of conciliation, for he had tact enough to see that his fellow-townsmen, finding himself unequal to a wordy war, might have recourse to some other means of asserting rustic supremacy, — "come, come, gentlemen, don't let us have M. le Duc interfering with our dinner. He's done us enough harm without that."

"I should think he had, confounded radical!" grumbled M. Ballanchu, still eying M. Filoselle threateningly.

"Radical?" echoed the commercial trav-

eller, catching up the word, and laughing from ear to ear. "There, my good Monsieur Seedsman, didn't I tell you he must be a phenomenon, this old man. *Peste!* you don't suppose it's every province in France that begets radical dukes."

"No, and a good job too," roared M. Ballanchu. "And this one would never have been what he is if his nephew had had five minutes' time before dying to disinherit him. Clairefontaine wasn't made for such as he — a wrong-headed, obstinate, canting Jacobin."

There was a stiff old half-pay officer of the name of Duroseau dining at the *table d'hôte*. He had been too much absorbed as yet by the process of mastication to take any part in the conversation. (His teeth were false, and he was obliged to eat slowly to prevent them coming out.) But now, having laid down his knife and fork, and noticing the puzzled look on the commercial traveller's face, he said gruffly, — "Young man, you must have heard of the ex-deputy, Manuel Gerold?"

"Of course I have, captain; he was one of the first speakers in the old Assembly under the Republic and poor King Pear.*

I heard him speak once in the House of Representatives. Thunder! Monsieur Ballanchu, your voice was nothing to his. But what of him, captain?"

"Well, young man, it's he who is now Duke of Hautbourg."

M. Filoselle, who had not been brought up at court, and ignored a good many maxims of dinner-table etiquette, gave a prolonged whistle.

M. Duroseau went on, not sorry to have taken the "forward young jackanapes" aback.

"At the time when you saw Monsieur Manuel Gerold, under the late King's reign" (Captain Duroseau laid an emphasis on the words *late King*. He was not a Bonapartist; he had fought under the Dukes of Orleans, Nemours, and Aumale in Africa, and would have been glad to cut off M. Filoselle's ears for calling Louis Philippe King Pear) — "At the time, I say, when you saw M. Gerold, his proper title was Count de Clairebourg; but he has always been a Republican, and never called himself otherwise than by the family name — Gerold. He is the uncle of the Duke who was killed by — by — ahem! — in 1851. He was locked up at the *coup d'état*, but let out as soon as it was found that he was his

nephew's heir. At present he is living in Brussels."

Captain Duroseau, having delivered himself of this concise biographical summary, deemed he had contributed his ample share towards the general fund of conversation, and turned his attention towards a piece of Gruyère cheese.

"*Tiens, tiens,*" muttered the commercial traveller, who had become a little pensive. "that tall man with the gray hair and the eyes like lanterns, who set me all aglow when he let fall those words about liberty and justice — that man is Duke of Hautbourg! And you call him a canting Jacobin, M. Ballanchu. Do you know what we called him in Paris? We had surnamed him *l'honnête Gerold*."

"He was a Republican, sir," said Captain Duroseau, looking up from his cheese. The captain admired honesty as much as any man, but he would not allow that it could exist amongst Republicans.

"I don't care that — what you called him in Paris," retorted the seedsman, snapping his fingers energetically. "I only know this much, that it was a bad day for us all down here in Hautbourg when the property up at Clairefontaine yonder fell into the hands of a man who had such cursed mean notions as to how a landlord should spend his money. Let a man be what he likes, say I, so long as he's poor; but when he's rich, and a duke, why then let him show people what a nobleman is, and throw radicalism and all that pack of nonsense to them as have need of it."

This sentiment seemed so perfectly in accordance with the spirit of practical wisdom, that the three farmers, the boot-maker, the host, and the tax-gatherer burst into a cordial "Ay, ay, well said." Of course, the tax-gatherer had not heard a word, but his idea was that somebody's health had been proposed, and as the seedsman followed up his remarks by draining his glass dry, he, the tax-gatherer, did likewise. The only two who did not join in the applause were the half-pay captain and the commercial traveller. The former muttered dryly that he did not see what change of fortune had got to do with change of politics, and the latter simply asked: — "Does this M. Gerold, this new Duke of Hautbourg, do nothing for the poor of your town?"

"Poor, sir! who cares two figs for the poor?" replied M. Ballanchu, always foremost in the van. "Who ever said a word about the poor, I should like to know? Do you suppose because a man sends ostentatiously twenty thousand francs a year to be distributed amongst a parcel of cripples and old women, I and my fellow-tradesmen are

* *Le Roi Peire*; literally, King Pear — his Majesty King Louis Philippe. The sobriquet was much in vogue between 1830 and 1848; it was an allusion to the shape of his Majesty's head. Happy the king whose enemies can find no worse nick-name for him than King Pear.

my the better for it? Perhaps you think I can pay for my dinner by telling our host here that M. le Duc has put a thousand napoleons into the poor-box? Ask M. Duval." This sarcasm, emitted in a tone of derisive scorn, obtained an immense success. M. Duval thought it was one of the most delicate flights of wit he had heard for many a long day, and inwardly blamed himself for the unjust estimate he had formed of M. Ballanchu's mental powers. As for the three farmers, Toulmouche, Truchepoule, and Follavoine, they reflected that this seedsman was assuredly a strong head, who would one of these days do something in politics.

A little jealous of his compeer's triumph, M. Scarpin, the bootmaker, felt the moment had come for reaping some glory in his turn.

"Now-a-days," said he, "the poor are a great deal too rich; they take the bread off the plate of their betters"—

"Alas! and only leave one the veal!" exclaimed M. Filoselle. "You see," he added pathetically, "we have lighted upon degenerate times. What with radical dukes and wealthy paupers, there is no knowing where we should all go, were it not for the honest sentiments of such men as M. the Seedsman. M. Ballanchu, I admire your theories; M. Scarpin—paragon of bootmakers!—I shall make a note of your observation. But tell me—for I have yet to learn—why your depraved Jacobin lives at Brussels. That part of the mystery has not been explained yet." And the commercial traveller turned towards Captain Duroseau.

"I don't know, sir," replied the old officer, curtly; "M. de Hautbourg's business doesn't concern me." The fact is, in spite of himself, the worthy captain looked upon a duke rather in the light of a superior officer; and he was not best pleased to hear him discussed with so much familiarity by a company of "clod-hoppers" and "counter-jumpers."

"When a man lives at Brussels," exclaimed M. Ballanchu, in a sapient tone, "I say there must be something in it. I know more of Brussels than M. le Duc thinks for. People don't go and live at Brussels unless they have a reason."

"No, that they don't," assented M. Scarpin, mysteriously.

"Then you mean to say?"—insinuated M. Filoselle.

"I mean to say nothing, sir," responded M. Ballanchu sternly. "Only, I'm a man of business, I am; and unless I have proof positive that a man has a good motive for doing any thing, I make it my rule to believe the contrary. This M. le Duc is not

exiled by the Government, he has plenty of money and a house waiting here for him. Why doesn't he come to it? If you can tell me that, I shall be ready to listen to you; but, until you do, you will allow me to have my own opinion." And saying this, M. Ballanchu folded his napkin and pushed his chair from the table.

"Yes, yes," muttered M. Scarpin, likewise laying down his napkin, and shaking his head. "There's something not clear in all this. Why was the Duke kept at such distance by his nephew and brother in past days? Why was he never asked to Clairefontaine? Why did nobody ever hear nothing of him until, when it was found that Monsieur the late Duke having left no will, it was he who was to come into the property? Why does he hide away now without daring to show himself?"

The seedsman, the bootmaker, the three farmers, and the host exchanged meaning glances. To tell the truth, they were a little alarmed at their own perspicacity. Without having the least idea what it was they suspected, each yet felt as though his preternatural acuteness had put him on the scent of a tragic state secret. The most solemn-looking, however, was the tax-gatherer. As he had not caught a single syllable of what was said, his countenance was more mysteriously profound than that of any of the others.

The captain, who disliked tattling, and who besides had finished his cheese, rose and took up his hat to go; M. Filoselle followed his example; and this was the signal for a general break-up of the party. But the commercial traveller, who, perhaps, was used to having the last word, had not the good sense to retire; maintaining that silence which is known to be of gold. Picking up his carpet-bag in a corner of the room, he exclaimed with enthusiasm: "O charming town! remarkable alike for its boiled beef and for the genial instincts of its inhabitants, it pains my heart to leave thee. But say, Ballanchu, we shall meet again; and perchance, next time I come thou wilt purchase of me an instrument of music whereon to pipe the praises of that duke whom now thou abusest; for should he put in an appearance here, O friend! and shouldst thou have the luck to make his acquaintance, I think thou wilt soon discover that, spite of his living at Brussels" (here M. Filoselle judged well to put a prudent distance betwixt him and the seedsman), "he outweighs in honesty both thee and me—ay, and the lot of us, not to speak of the tax-gatherer."

"Talk for yourself, you parrot-voiced puppy," spluttered the red-faced M. Ballanchu. "And the day I buy any thing of

thee, write it down in a book that I've got more money than I want, and have ceased to care about being swindled."

"*Vive l'esprit!*" retorted the undaunted M. Filoselle. "There is but one Duke, and Ballanchu shall be his seedsman. M. Duval, I charge you take care of that man; he is so sharp that I foresee he will cut himself." And with this Parthian shot, M. Filoselle chucked Madelon, the serving-maid, under the chin, threw her a twenty-sou piece, made his obeisance to the company, and vanished.

"*Que le diable l'emporte!*" shouted the seedsman, shaking his fist after him. "And as for that 'honest Gerold' of thine, I fancy thou and he would make a pretty pair." To which observation the whole company for the third time cried assent. M. Hoche-pain this once joining like the rest; for, having caught the two words "pretty pair," he concluded they must refer to a couple of cauliflowers which had figured at the board, and so remarked in confidence to the irate seedsman:—

"Yes, a pretty pair truly, but not quite boiled enough."

* * * *

This dinner and this conversation took place at the Hôtel de Clairefontaine towards the end of September in the year 1854. A week afterwards, day for day, some stir was caused in the hotel by what was no longer a diurnal occurrence, the arrival of three travellers. They had come by the mid-day train, purposed dining, and would, perhaps, stay a night. One of them was an old man of about seventy, the other two looked like his sons.

CHAPTER II.

HONEST GEROLD.

Un sacrifice fier charme une âme hautaine :
La gloire en est présente et la douleur lointaine.

As stood to reason, they were given the best rooms in the hotel; indeed, there was good choice and to spare, for the house was empty. Mdlle. Madelon showed them into the yellow drawing-room on the first floor, overlooking the market-place, and lost no time in telling them that the two pictures on the wall facing them as they went in were portraits of Monseigneur the late Duke of Hautbourg and his father—"the owners of this house, if you please, gentlemen." That, over the fireplace, with the periwig, was Monsieur le Marquis, who had been beheaded by Monsieur Robespierre;

and that in the corner there, with the frame in brown Holland, was another member of the Hautbourg family, Monseigneur Jean de Clairebourg, Bishop of Marvaux, a holy man, who had done a great deal of good by burning some Protestants. Mdlle. Madelon had recited all this so often, that she knew it by heart. She used at one time to turn a pretty penny by pointing out to travellers the identical bed in which Monseigneur the first Duke of Hautbourg had slept on the night of his return from emigration in 1814, before they had had time to prepare his room for him at the castle. Unfortunately, she had rather overdone this, for, finding it paid, and that people liked to sleep in Monseigneur's bed, she had ended by pointing out every corner in the house as having been occupied by his Grace, and had even unwarily put a gentleman of the Filoselle type, who came thrice to the hotel, each time in a different bed, warranted slept in by the great noble. On going away the third time, the gentleman had inquired dryly whether emigration had not imparted somewhat erratic habits to Monseigneur, since he spent his nights going about from bed to bed.

The oldest of the three strangers listened very kindly to the girl's prattle, and the two younger ones seemed amused by it. They were three as handsome faces as any admirer of manly beauty could have hoped to meet. The veteran carried himself erect, and had something in his gait that revealed the old soldier. His hair and beard were both long, however—longer than old soldiers generally allow themselves; for the hair, which was of dazzling white, fell to the shoulders, and the beard half covered the chest. What chiefly attracted one in this old man was the expression of his eyes, which was singularly eloquent and gentle. They beamed upon one, those eyes; and one felt, under their quiet, steady gaze, that they could never have quailed before anybody. The voice, too, had a rare accent of benevolence; it was the voice of a man who thought well of human nature, and had met on his path more good characters than bad ones.

The two younger men were sufficiently alike to make it discernible at a glance that they were brothers. The elder looked three or four and twenty; the other was probably a couple of years his junior. Both had the same eyes—at least, very nearly the same—as the old man, and their faces were like his, bright, open, and intelligent. Of the two, it was, perhaps, the younger who was the strongest, and he also looked the graver; the elder was slighter of build, more graceful, and certainly more inclined to laugh, for scarcely a minute passed but

saw his pleasant features lighted up by a smile. Both were very well dressed — not a common merit in France, where young men are the worst dressers in Christendom — but as traits of character can be gathered from little facts, it may as well be mentioned that, whilst the younger wore a plain black silk cravat tied in a knot, the elder had a black satin scarf, with a cameo pin in it, and, moreover, wore a gold ring.

Between the three men seemed to exist that cordial, trustful familiarity bred of deepest love on the one hand, and of fullest affection, respect, and confidence on the other.

Mdlle. Madelon, though not given to enthusiasm, thought within herself that they were three as nice gentlemen as she had seen for a long while; and proceeded to testify this sentiment by dusting some of the chairs — an operation which she often neglected where less comely strangers were concerned. Having done this, and opened the windows to show "Messieurs" the market-place, and the statue of the Poitiers hero prancing in the middle, she announced that Monsieur Duval would doubtless be up presently to offer his respects; and, sure enough, the words were scarcely out of her mouth, before that gentleman appeared in person.

He was very obsequious; carried a napkin on his arm, as if his house were chock full, and he had done nothing but wait at table all day; and expressed a hope that the gentlemen were lodged to their liking.

"Perfectly, M. Duval, thank you," said the old man, politely. "But we shall not have occasion to make much use of your comfortable rooms, for my sons and I will be out all day. It is one o'clock now; I think we shall hardly be home before seven; may we rely upon you to get us dinner for that hour?"

"Monsieur may place his entire confidence in me," replied M. Duval, bowing. (Allow me to notice here how fond Frenchmen are of phrases with the word confidence. An English inn-keeper would have answered, "Dinner will be on the table punctually at seven, sir.")

The travellers having seen their rooms and intrusted their bags to Mdlle. Madelon, had no further reason for staying in-doors, and so followed M. Duval down stairs. The worthy host entertained them with warm praises of himself and his house all the way, and was once more renewing to them his assurance about the confidence and the dinner, when he remembered, just as the strangers were crossing the entrance-hall, that he had forgotten to ask for their names. The French police are always very anxious to know the names of strangers

who stop at hotels, and the instructions given to inn-keepers on this subject are peremptory. No name, no lodging. Besides, M. Duval was curious on his own account to know whom he was harboring. Every thing about these well-looking, gentleman-like travellers, pointed to the presumption that they were not hap-hazard folk.

"I beg your pardon, Messieurs," he cried, "would you have any objection to put your names on the register?"

The old man appeared a little annoyed, but he said nothing to show it, and followed M. Duval into the parlor, where the host began bustling about to find a new quill-pen, and then laid out on the table that imposing folio register, which has to be inspected by M. le Commissaire every three days. The pages were marked out in columns, and the traveller was requested by printed queries at the top to supply information as to the few following particulars:— Name and Christian Name, Age, Birthplace, Profession or Trade, Motives of present journey, Name of place last visited, Name of place to be visited next, Nature of the Certificates of Identity in the Traveller's possession; and, lest the traveller should after this feel that he had not said enough, and be disposed to communicate more about himself and his intentions, there was a fifth column headed Observations. The white-haired stranger took the pen from M. Duval, and in a clear, large hand silently filled up the blank spaces both for himself and his two sons; the host keeping at a discreet distance apart the while. When the formality had been gone through, however, M. Duval made a point of deploring the troublesome inquisitiveness of the police, who put gentlemen to so much trouble; and so followed the strangers to the door, very hearty in his apologies as he was in every thing. As soon as they had left the house he returned to the parlor. "Now," said he, "let us see;" but he had hardly cast his eyes on the register and the bold handwriting, still wet, than he gave a scared start, crying, "Mon Dieu! it's not possible — no — yet, by heavens! it is, though." And with one bound he was at the street-door again, his face all aglow with excitement, trying if he could perceive the travellers. But they were already out of sight. They had turned the corner of the market-place, and were gone down the street towards the high-road leading to Clairefontaine.

M. Duval was fain to come in again, but he did not remain in-doors long; and before an hour was over, the whole town of Hautbourg was in as great a state of excitement as he was.

The road to Clairefontaine was a fine

one, and must have borne an animated appearance during the reign of that irrepressible late duke who was so continually cropping up in the conversations of the *Hautbourgeois*. An enterprising builder had, however, done his best to spoil it by converting a part of it into a suburb of the borough. He had erected on each side of it a number of lath-and-plaster trifles, decorated with the pretentious name of *châteaux* and even *châtelets*, but which looked about as much like the real thing as a child's house of toy-bricks looks like Windsor Castle. There are few things so ghastly as new ruins, and these *châtelets*, castlets, villas, or whatever else they may be called, were all in ruins, not from age, but from want of care. Imagine a band of school-girls decked out smart for a holiday in pink and white, but caught in a good drenching deluge of rain at the day's outset, and standing piteously in the sun an hour afterwards to dry themselves—such was pretty much the idea suggested by the excoriated white plaster on the walls, the washed-out, red tiles, and the shutters denuded of almost every vestige of paint. In point of fact, the houses had never been inhabited, and the builder had gone where many other good builders go—into the bankruptcy court.

The three men walked along, chatting pleasantly, or, to speak with more accuracy, the two younger ones chatted whilst the elder listened. He seemed to have grown a little grave and pre-occupied, and this gravity rather increased than diminished every minute; but he smiled at the bright humor of the eldest of his sons, who, teeming with wit and spirits, found something to say of every object, animate and inanimate, on the road; and he nodded kindly whenever the youngest, less brilliant but more thoughtful, capped his brother's witticisms by some quaint remark, arguing gentleness of mood, and quiet, scholarly perception.

"Where are you taking us to, father?" asked the eldest, smiling; "I begin to think this mysterious pilgrimage of ours is to end on a ruin; every thing we pass is dilapidated. Look at that public-house."

"Our pilgrimage is drawing to its close, Horace," answered the old man, returning the smile; but he added with some anxiety in his tone, "Do you really think the country looks dilapidated? We have met no beggars yet, and I generally make that my test. As to ruined public-houses, why, you know, I do not feel much sympathy for them."

Horace looked around a moment, as if trying to detect a beggar, and, not succeeding, answered, "I really think one only sees beggars in free lands. I have met plenty in Belgium, and when we went to

England last year I saw nothing else; but here"—

"Here one has gendarmes instead," broke in the younger brother quietly; and he pointed to a booted representative of law and order, who was, in truth, the fifth or sixth they had met that afternoon.

They had walked about a mile and a half, and, at this juncture, reached a point where four roads met. A young girl was coming towards them with a basket of eggs on her arm. The old man, who appeared doubtful as to which road to take, raised his hat and said, "Will you kindly tell us the way to Clairefontaine, Mademoiselle?"

"There to the left, Monsieur," she answered; "it's not above ten minutes' walk. See the sign-post."

They had not noticed the sign-post. It said: *Clairefontaine*, $\frac{1}{2}$ kilomètre; *Clairebourg*, 2 kilomètres; *Boisgency*, $3\frac{1}{2}$ kilomètres; *Sainte Sophie*, 5 kilomètres.

"Clairefontaine!" muttered the elder brother, and he proceeded to quote what seemed to him appropriate,—"Fons Bandusia, splendor vitæ, cras donaberis hoda. Are we bent on sacrifice, father?" he added, laughing.

The old man laid a hand on his shoulder. "You shall answer that question for me yourself, my dear boy, when we come back this evening," he replied, with a gravity which surprised his two sons. "Perhaps, indeed, Clairefontaine is to be our Bandusian Fount," he continued, gently, "and maybe there will be a sacrifice there. I accept your omen."

The party walked on in silence for the next few minutes—the father still grave, the sons both wondering—until a turning in the road brought them abruptly in view of the lodge-gates of Clairefontaine, with the princely avenue of elms beyond, and the turreted mansion, half palace, half castle, closing the prospect grandly in the distance. The old man's face seemed to light up with quick emotion, and the two young men gave a murmur of admiration. Certes, it was a splendid sight. Clairefontaine House in its lonely majesty, bathed in the purple rays of the autumn sun, and surrounded by its cortège of stately trees, still looked like a queen in the midst of her court.

"What a thing is wealth," sighed Horace. "And to think that the owner of this paradise is perhaps some Croesus who finds the country slow, and spends three-fourths of his time in Paris cooped up in a set of rooms scarcely bigger than that lodge yonder."

"You will have the opportunity of inspecting your paradise at leisure," answered his father, "for this is the end of our jour-

ney." And the gate being now reached, he pulled the bell-chain hanging on one side of it.

Out hobbled the old crone whose acquaintance we have already made. She was used to the application of visitors desirous of seeing the grounds, and the more of such came the better she liked it; for a visitor generally represented at least a forty-sou piece. These, however, were not ordinary applicants, as she soon found. When the three strangers had been admitted within the massive bronze gates, forged all over with scutcheons and ducal coronets, the elder drew a letter from his pocket and handed it to her.

"It's from Monsieur Claude, the agent," he said.

The old woman fumbled in her apron for a pair of horn-rimmed spectacles, put them on with a shaking hand, broke the seal of the letter, and read these lines:—

"MADAME MABOULE, — You will please to show the bearer of this all over the castle, the rooms, stables, picture-gallery, or, should he prefer visiting the house alone, you will give him the keys.

"J. CLAUDE."

"Oh! Monsieur, then, is the gentleman whom Monsieur Claude was speaking about the other day?" exclaimed Madame Maboule, throwing a searching but respectful glance at the strangers. "He said a gentleman was coming as would want to see the castle—a friend of Monseigneur the new Duke's, I believe?"

The old man bent his head affirmatively; his sons opened their eyes; they appeared not to know in the least whither their father was tending, nor what was his motive in bringing them there.

Madame Maboule, dismal at her best, but more than usually so when she stood in the presence of the great, whimpered a hope that Monseigneur was quite well, and inquired whether the Messieurs would go up to the house alone, or whether she should accompany them.

There was a moment's deliberation on this point; the stranger evidently wished to save the worthy old soul the mile's walk up the avenue, but Madame Maboule protested with wheezy fortitude that the walk was nothing to her, and that the Messieurs would lose their way in the apartments if she was not there to guide them.

"But perhaps," added she, with an inquiring glance at them all, "the Messieurs have been here before?"

"I was here once," answered the old man, in a hurried tone, "but it was a long time ago; things have changed since then.

I might not know my way now." And to compensate the honest crone for the trouble she was going to take, he slipped a *napoleon* into her hand.

"I am sure Monsieur is very generous," was the grateful and somewhat bewildered acknowledgment; and the next minute the four set off in company, the old woman leading the way, and the three gentlemen walking slowly, not to tire her.

As nothing so much resembles one old mansion as another old mansion; and as, moreover, the description of abandoned drawing-rooms and bedrooms, silent libraries and picture-galleries, old-fashioned furniture muffled up in chintz coverings, and old-fashioned beds overhung with imposing dusty canopies, can scarcely be expected to interest any save very enthusiastic admirers of bric-a-brac, we will not follow the strangers in their inspection of the Castle of Clairefontaine, but, leaving them to the care of Madame Maboule, wait for them outside on the open terrace, overlooking what had a few years before been one of the finest gardens in the province. The walk up the avenue had taken about three-quarters of an hour, protracted as it was by constant halts on the part of Madame Maboule to point out this or that feature of interest in the landscape. Here was a bench on which Monsieur the late Duke would often sit to read his paper. There, on that rising plot of ground, a belvedere erected by Monsieur the Marquis, who was very fond of looking at the stars with a telescope, eighty years ago; there, again, in that by-path, if the Messieurs would step out of their way and see, was a marble urn erected over the burying-place of a pet dog by Madame la Marquise, wife of Monseigneur who was imprisoned in the Bastille by Louis XIV.—a very beautiful lady, gentlemen, and much respected by the King. But of all the objects, that which had most fascination for the old woman, was a beech-tree that had been used to hang a Jacobin on. The man had led the sacking of Clairefontaine in 1793 and had retired to live in peace for the next twenty years. But in 1814, when the exiled family returned, the peasantry had dragged him out and strung him up in the night opposite the new Duke's windows—a delicate piece of attention that had greatly touched Monseigneur, and seemed both natural and proper to Madame Maboule. In the castle itself the party staid more than a couple of hours. The old man appeared desirous that his sons should see every nook and corner of the house and miss none of its accumulated splendors. Madame Maboule lent herself readily enough to his whim. She took them from floor to floor, from

room to lobby, lobby to hall, hall to chapel; turning creaking locks with her jingling keys, and explaining every thing as if she was speaking about a city of the dead, and showing things that had long ceased to be understood by a modern generation. What more garrulous than an old woman who has lived five-and-sixty years on an estate, and has room for nothing else but the memory of its past glories in her venerable head? Every foot of carpet within the doors of Clairefontaine House was so much consecrated ground to Madame Maboule. She talked about her departed masters with a plaintive, wobegone, motherly sort of affection; and, throughout all her utterances, rang like the burden of a dirge—a lamentation over that new Duke whom she had never seen and whose absence she could not understand. The young men listened to her with much the same kind of silent attention which one bestows upon an aged monk showing one over a cathedral. Their father spoke very little during the whole two hours. Only once, when they were in an upper room—which, in old times, had been a nursery—he smiled a rather sad smile, and, pointing to a picture of a very young child hanging in a corner, asked who that was. "That, sir, is the present Duke of Hautbourg," answered the old woman; "it was taken nigh upon seventy years ago."

At last the inspection was over; the desolate castle had been visited from roof to basement, and the three strangers with their guide stood together on the terrace.

"Well, Emile," asked the old man of his youngest son, "what do you think of all we have just seen?" And he looked with a rather curious expression into the lad's grave, blue eyes.

"I think there is a skeleton in that house like in many poorer ones, father," replied the young man, pensively.

"What skeleton, dear boy?"

"The skeleton that prevents the new Lord of Clairefontaine from coming and living here. Do you not think, father," added he, with concern, "that there must be very bitter memories attached to some of that splendor, if the new Duke of Hautbourg persists in keeping away like this?"

The father made no immediate answer, but a few moments afterwards he turned to the old lodge-keeper and said softly, "We will not trouble you to stay with us any longer, Madame Maboule. I and my sons are going to sit down for a little under yonder oak, and perhaps we shall walk about in the park for a short while afterwards."

Madame Maboule dropped a courtesy. "Very well, sir," she answered, in her usual dolorous tone. "When you want to return

you have only to follow the avenue straight, and I shall be down at the lodge to open the gate for you." She courtesied for a second time and hobbled away slowly.

The three men walked towards the oak, which stood in the centre of a grass-plot just beyond the outskirts of the garden and commanded a view of almost the entire park. Was it an undefined presentiment of something strange about to be told them, or merely hazard, that kept the young men silent as they went? anyhow, silent they were: and save but for the chirping of the birds overhead, and the muffled sound of their own footsteps in the long grass, there would have been a complete stillness all around them as far as the eye could reach. There was a wooden form running round the rough trunk of the oak, and all three sat down on it.

"Can you guess why I have brought you here?" inquired the father, addressing both his sons.

They shook their heads.

"Why, father?" they asked.

"I wish to tell you a story," he said, affectionately taking a hand of theirs in each of his, as they sat on either side of him. "Should you like to be told what is the skeleton in Clairefontaine, Emile? And you, Horace, are you curious to learn how people may live cooped up in rooms no bigger than the park-lodge, and yet be more at ease than in a fine palace like this?"

Emile smiled slightly.

"Then there is a skeleton," he rejoined, and Horace added, grimly, "I was complaining that one met nothing but beggars in free countries. One may remark, also, that there seem to be a deplorable number of skeletons in rich houses. I have never been over a castle, but somebody had poisoned somebody else in it, or put him down a well, or thrown him out of the window."

"Yes; but there is nothing of that kind in my story," interrupted the old man good-naturedly. "It is not a legend of murder or mystery. It is—well, I can hardly call it an every-day story, but you shall hear and judge." And, seeing both young men attentive, with their eyes fixed on him, he began his recital in a quiet, simple tone—much as he would have told a fairy tale to young children.

"Once upon a time," he said, "there was a very rich nobleman, who lived in a house such as this, we will say. He was a kind-hearted, well-meaning man; but he came in troublous times, when people's minds were excited by the remembrance of many centuries of oppression, and, when at last there was a rising of the down-trodden against their masters, he paid, as we must often do here below, for the sins of some of

his ancestors. Let it be recorded that he perished nobly. In dying he left two orphan sons (their mother was dead some years before) — the elder seventeen years old, the younger nine. In the ordinary course of things, the elder must have succeeded his father, and become his brother's guardian; but there was so much exasperation against the nobility throughout the whole country, that the boys would not have been safe had they remained in France. So both of them went into exile. The eldest, who had assumed the family title of marquis, became an officer in the Prince of Condé's army at Coblenz; the younger, who was a viscount, was taken as page of honor into the household of a royal princess, the Countess of Provence — the same, who, a few years later, died in London, calling herself, and called by the Royalists, Queen of France. I have no need to remind you what came eventually of the Prince of Condé's army. The officers and soldiers who composed it were brave men, but they were bearing arms against their country, and somehow experience shows that victory does not remain long on the side of those who are not in the right. After a series of reverses they got dispersed. Some went and accepted service in foreign armies; others — and, probably, the wisest there — started for America, to try and build up their fortunes once more in a new world; and others, again, emigrated to England, where they formed a large, but not very united, nor always very reasonable, colony of titled refugees. Amongst those who went to England were the young Marquis and his brother. They had been completely ruined by the Revolution, for it had been decreed by the Convention that those who emigrated should forfeit their estates; so that all the two boys had to live upon was the money raised by means of some of the family plate and jewels, which a devoted servant had been able to rescue from the wreck of the property, and had contrived to smuggle out of France. Those were hard times for lads brought up in purple; but the two brothers would have been ungrateful to complain, for many were twenty times worse off than they. There were plenty of dukes and counts who became music, fencing, language, or drawing masters. One or two set up as small shopkeepers. There was one (he became a peer of France afterwards) who took to carpentering, and very successfully, too. Unfortunately, however, this adversity, which should have read a lesson to many of those whose lack of wisdom had been the cause of the Revolution, seemed not to profit them much, and there was little else in the refugee colony but bicker-

ings and disputes, teacup storms and intrigues, plans for invading France and restoring the old régime, and anathemas of all sorts against the Liberal principles of the Revolution. It was this that first pained the younger of the two brothers, and, by degrees, estranged him from the Royalist cause. As he grew old enough to think for himself he could not see that the Revolution had been such a crying wrong as those of his own caste would have had him believe. Of course the excesses of the Revolution, the blood-orgies of '93, were a wrong — a cruel wrong, and they have been dearly expiated by Republicans. But one should separate the good from the bad in pronouncing judgment; — one should draw a difference between the Revolutionists who asked only for freedom and fair laws, and who fell victims of their moderation, from the few sorry villains who — But let us speak mercifully of them, too," exclaimed the old man, humbly. "Who shall presume to judge motives: Death has passed over good and bad alike now!"

He paused for a moment, and then resumed: "The boy, the young Viscount I mean, had struggled a good while with himself before daring to admit even to his own conscience that he was disposed to think differently from those who formed his habitual society. You see, his father had been put to death unjustly, and it required some time before he could perceive that it was no more just to hold the Republicans as a body responsible for this crime than it would have been to make his father responsible for the misdoings of those brother noblemen of his whose follies had driven the country into rebellion. Perhaps if the language of the exiles in whose company he lived had been more tolerant than it was, their conduct more dignified, and their apparent aims more patriotic, he would never have been brought to reason in this way, and would have remained a Royalist to the end, like his elder brother. But, with few exceptions, the conduct of the refugees was not dignified; and if they felt any patriotism, they seldom showed it in their schemes. To a boy of seventeen they seemed a feeble, prejudiced, selfish body of men, whom misfortune had neither chastened nor instructed; and it was impossible not to reflect, after hearing them talk, that should they ever recover their power they would inevitably lose it again before long through sheer force of obstinacy and wrongheadedness. In youth we quickly fly from one extreme to the other, for when we lose our faith in one set of principles we conclude that those most diametrically opposite to them must be the right ones. The young exile, feeling his confidence in and his admiration for the

Royalist party growing less and less every day, began gradually to take up with Republican views. This was at the period when Bonaparte was shaking all Europe with his Italian victories, and when the military glory of France shone with a lustre it had never possessed before. It was difficult not to feel one's heart thrill at the report of battles in which Frenchmen fought and won against treble odds; and though the refugees and the English papers with them sneered at these victories and declared they were not true, yet such denials were so evidently prompted by jealousy that they rather added to than diminished the enthusiasm with which every fresh success was received by those who really loved their country. One day — this was in the year 1801 — the young Viscount took a resolution. He was grown tired of an exile's life, and saw nothing to tempt him in the prospect of dangling indefinitely about the mock court of the Prince who styled himself Louis XVIII. Summoning up all his courage — and I can assure you it needed courage — he informed his brother of his intention of returning to France and enlisting in General Bonaparte's army. The Marquis had never bated a jot from his Royalism, and the thought that any one of his family could ever turn Republican had not crossed his mind even in dream. He started at his brother's communication as if he had been shot. The thing seemed to him like blasphemy. A brother of his to turn renegade and serve in the ranks with those who had murdered his father! Why this was as bad as being accomplice to a parricide! He became white with dismay, seized his brother's hand, and entreated him to declare that it was all a hoax, a joke, or any thing save the truth. But the younger brother held good. He had been prepared for some consternation, but he felt so sure of his own motives, he knew so well that hatred against his father's murderers burned within him as strongly as ever, that he attached little importance to the horrified expressions of his brother, and even hoped to convert him. He pleaded his case with all the boldness he could muster. There could be no offence to their father's memory, he showed, in serving their common country. It was not Robespierre or Marat he was going to fight for — those men were dead — he was simply going to be a French soldier; and, in short, he adduced all the arguments which he had uppermost in his heart, and which his conscience has ever since — yes, ever since — assured him were right. The Marquis, however, refused to be convinced. Chivalrous and unbending in all points of loyalty, he considered desertion of one's party a

crime too heinous for excuse. He was shocked: he cast his brother away from him like a viper; and from that day up to his death he would never consent to see him or speak to him again."

The old man became silent a moment. He was a little pale; but he proceeded in an unbroken voice: "Party spirit ran high in those days; I believe men could hate each other more intensely than they do now. It was a time when the words Royalist or Republican put barriers between men which no strength of family ties could break down; and once a man had left one camp for the other, the feud between himself and his former friends was something deep, lasting, and absurdly violent. In this case the younger brother did not hate the elder, God knows! but the elder bore an eternal grudge against the younger, and — But let bygones be bygones, and may those with whom pardon lies forgive as fully as the younger brother has forgiven. I don't want to make my story too long," continued the old man; "so shall only say that Fortune dealt kindly with the boy who enlisted in Bonaparte's army. He soon rose to be an officer, was at the end of three years a captain, and might have gone much higher had he chosen to remain in the service. But in becoming a soldier under Bonaparte he had sworn allegiance to the Republic which then existed, and had not foreseen that an Empire was going to be established. When the First Consul converted himself into an Emperor, he tendered his resignation, which was not immediately accepted — for officers and men were wanted just then for the Austerlitz campaign; — but on the declaration of peace, when it was seen that he would neither accept promotion nor the legion of honor, he was allowed to retire; and so went to settle in Paris, where, by the help of pen instead of sword, he cut out for himself a new career, which was blessed, perhaps, beyond his deserts — certainly, beyond his expectations. The elder brother, meanwhile, prospered in a different way. While still in exile he contracted a wealthy marriage — in fact he married the daughter of an English slave-trader — and, in course of time, came back to France with the Bourbons, was made a duke, bought back with his wife's money the family estates, which had been sold after confiscation as 'national property,' and died with many honors upon him, unwavering to the end in his allegiance to the dynasty whose ups and downs he had shared. Now what should you say," asked the old man, looking at both his sons alternately, and consulting their eyes with some signs of emotion, — "What should you say if, by a turn of fate, the elder brother's only son, having died childless, the younger

brother — the Republican — had one day unexpectedly become inheritor both of the dukedom and the redeemed estates? — “Try and consider,” he went on in a voice that, to his sons, sounded almost pleading, so modestly appealing was it, and so earnest, — “Try and consider what was the position of this younger brother. He had never looked for this inheritance and never desired it. It came upon him through a calamity, which was itself the result of a political crime, and this alone might have afforded an honest man excuse enough for refusing the fortune, seeing that it is difficult to hate crime as we should when it has helped to make us rich. But there were other reasons. From the moment when he had parted from his brother, the Republican had, boy and man, pinned his faith to one code of principles. Rightly or wrongly, these principles did not allow of his wearing a title, and so he had discarded that of viscount, which he originally wore, for his own plain family name. It was under this name that he was generally known, and had conquered such small reputation as he possessed; and it was under this name that, by the confidence of a Radical constituency, he had been elected three or four times over to the legislature as an advocate of liberal opinions — that is, of freedom at home and of slave-abolition in the colonies; for, remember, we are speaking of a few years ago, and the abolition of slavery was one of the chief party-cries of French liberals before '48. Now, under all these circumstances,” concluded the speaker slowly, “could this man who refused to wear a viscount's title with consistency assume a dukedom? or could this man, who was an opponent of slavery, accept an estate that had been bought with the money of a slave-trader?”

There was a moment's silence — it was only a single instant — and then both sons rose together, their heads uncovered and their eyes glistening.

“No, father,” faltered the youngest proudly, but he was too much moved to say more: and the eldest added, his voice gushing with admiration and enthusiasm, “But you had no need of dukedom or estate, father, to make your name illustrious.”

The three men shook hands; and in that warm, silent grasp, and the few words just recorded, was the father's act of self-denial — his refusal of wealth and rank for conscience's sake — ratified by his children.

This, by the way, was the first the two young men had ever heard of their family history. They had known their father only as Manuel Gerold, a Republican, who was one of the most esteemed leaders of his party, and whose unaffected integrity and simple, undeviating fidelity to principle had

earned for him, at the hand of friends and foes alike, the enviable surname of “the honest Gerold.” There are certain Frenchmen who have the knack of making Republicanism peculiarly hideous, but Manuel Gerold was not one of them. The Republic, such as he dreamed it, would have been a very fine thing; unfortunately, it had this drawback, that before it could be established every man must have put away the leaven of unrighteousness and become transformed into an enlightened philanthropist, devoted to schemes of intelligent benevolence. I do not think that in the worthy gentleman's projects of commonwealth any provision at all had been made for houses of correction — much less for such functionaries as a hangman, gendarmes, or turnkeys. He had a way of talking about schools which gave one to understand that crime was but the result of ignorance, and that if men only knew how to read, write and count, the necessity for coercive establishments would disappear. I suppose it would have been hardly fair to remind him of the remarkable number of individuals who turn their knowledge of the three rules to account by subtracting funds from their neighbors' pockets in order to add them to their own. With all his naiveness, however, and his humane belief in the innate virtues of mankind, Manuel Gerold was no mere dreamer. He could be shrewd when he chose, and he had such a hearty scorn for all that was mean or false that he had more than once taken adversaries aback by the crude, energetic way in which he assailed abuses. There was something in him both of the soldier and of the priest. Very mild in his habitual moods; very indulgent also, and chivalrously amiable, he could light up at the recital of a wrong, and pour out words with the same startling vehemence which the hermits of old must have used when they preached the crusades. Having, as he thought, nothing to expect of his family, he had brought up both his sons to the notion that they were humble *bourgeois* who would have to fight their way through life as he had had to fight his; and it had been one of his most constant lessons to them that if a man only remained honest he must end by being prosperous. This was a deep-rooted belief with him; it was not an empty maxim. Had he been well read in his Bible — which I am sorry to say he wasn't — he would have quoted the noble lines: “I was young and now I am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging their bread.” But being a Republican Frenchman (and one who held himself for a free-thinker, though he invoked God's blessing twenty times a day)

he simply quoted from his own experience, and said that he had known many men, honest and otherwise, but that he had never met with an honest man who had had cause to repent of his integrity. Educated in this precept, the boys had grown up to be, above all, manly and straightforward; they shared their father's loathing for every thing that was not true and frank, and both bade fair, if nothing came amiss, to follow him step for step in his republican opinions. France is not one of those countries where every right-minded person has a peerage on his table, so that it had been easy enough to keep them in ignorance of their father's family connections. A good many of Manuel Gerold's friends did not so much as suspect that he had any relationship to a ducal house; and as for the general public, the tendency towards self-depreciation is a failing of such decidedly limited growth amongst Frenchmen, that a man who dubs himself plain *bourgeois* is taken at his own valuation without either difficulty or questions. It should be added, now, that their father's communication did not much bewilder the young men. A few days before, Manuel Gerold, who had been living with them at Brussels ever since the *coup d'état*, had informed them quietly that he intended taking them to France "on a business visit," and once at Clairefontaine, he had told them his secret in the abrupt and simple way just shown. But the feeling brought uppermost in their minds by the recital was not one of very great surprise or excitement. At twenty-four and twenty-one, rent-rolls and dukedoms have not the same peculiar significance in our eyes which they acquire in after life. Somehow the young men thought it quite natural that their father should turn out to be a duke; just as natural that he should refuse to wear his title; and the most matter-of-course thing possible that, having inherited an estate with a slur of ill-gained money on it, he should put it away from him without hesitation. But this did not prevent their admiring and feeling proud of his disinterestedness; for noble traits have the faculty of moving us, even when we are best prepared for them.

There was a long pause, after which the father, who had been looking at his sons with great joy and tenderness, said: "And what should be done with an estate which everybody refuses?"

Emile was the first to speak.

"It has been bought with the price of human beings," he answered gravely; "let it be sold and the money employed in redeeming slaves, or in helping to abolish slavery in America."

"Yes, yes;" assented his brother eagerly.

Manuel Gerold had produced a piece of folded parchment of unmistakably legal appearance. "For the last three years," he observed, "the estate has been inasterless, that is, an agent has collected the revenues and paid them into different charities; but here is a deed I have had prepared which makes over the whole property to both of you jointly; so that now the disposal of it is in your hands."

Horace took the parchment and was for tearing it up instantly: "This shall be the sacrifice of which we spoke this morning," he exclaimed, laughing, and his brother approved, adding: "Yes, let us tear it up, it can do no good with us."

"Stay one moment," interposed Manuel Gerold, and he quoted the two lines that have been placed at the head of this chapter. They were from a new play of Ponsard's, very popular at that time. "Let me advise you to wait and not act under impulse, dear boys," he continued; "the merit of your sacrifice will be greater if it is accomplished after reflection. I did not like to speak to you of this before you were of an age to pronounce whether you thought as I did about this unlucky heritage; but I would not have you pronounce too quickly. Think whilst you may, in order that there shall never be any regret at having acted too hastily."

"But what should we think about?" asked the elder brother in a tone of surprise, and looking almost reproachfully at his father. "Can Emile or I ever think differently about this matter to what we do now?"

"Heaven grant not! my brave boy," replied the old man, smiling to re-assure him; "but I was considering the satisfaction you yourselves might feel in after-life, when, looking back upon these times, you could remember that you had given up a fortune, not on the spur of a generous moment, but calmly and deliberately, like men. This is what I was going to propose to you; let the title-deed remain in your hands for a stated period—say four or five years. During that time the revenues of Clairefontaine shall be devoted to whatever charities you wish; and if at the end of the term you have kept steadfast to your resolution, then let Emile's proposal be adopted, and the whole heritage return to its true owners, the unfortunate slaves with whose freedom it was bought."

It required some little time before either of the brothers could be brought to see the advantages of this scheme; indeed it is doubtful whether they ever did see the advantage of it at all; but the younger, to

please his father, whose real motives he divined, pretended conversion. Emile perceived that the true wish in Manuel Gerold's heart was that his sons should not be influenced by his presence in the decision they took; he desired that they should act for themselves when he was not there to see them, so that the merit of the sacrifice should be entirely with them:—"Very well, father," said the young man placidly, "let us wait for a while; it can make no difference."

The elder brother, however, did not give in so soon. He had opened the parchment and cast his eye mechanically over it: the deed was as formal as possible; it had been prepared before witnesses and signed, so as to be unimpeachable in a court of justice; it divided the estate into two equal parts, Clairefontaine Castle, with the domain of the same name and all the land situated in the town of Hautbourg, being the share of Horace; and the freeholds of Clairebourg, Boisgency, and Sainte Sophie, together with the family mansion in the Faubourg Saint Germain in Paris, being that of Emile. To satisfy the requirements of the law the Republican had been obliged for once in his life to sign with all his titles, and his name figured as Manuel Armand Gerold de Clairefontaine, Duke of Hautbourg and of Clairefontaine, Marquis of Clairebourg and of Sainte Sophie, Count of Boisgency, and Baron Gerold of Hautbourg. Horace Gerold, after looking at all this, folded up the document again and said in a tone of seriousness rather unusual to him: "I think we shall do better not to wait: our duty in this case is so plain that delay seems almost a wrong. Besides, five years! Who knows what may happen in that time?"

"But there is no absolute necessity for your making the term five years," replied Manuel Gerold cheerfully. "Make it what you like; say two years, or three years. All I want is that you should put yourselves through an ordeal sufficient to show that you are not afraid of the temptation. For, believe me, if you remain firm in your purpose for some reasonable time, it will be an encouragement to you in many and many trials to come; it will convince you that those sacrifices which seem hardest to the world are not hard to those who have a little common patience to help them."

This settled the matter. The moment it became a question of proving that he felt no fear of wavering, Horace Gerold would have agreed to wait twenty years. He looked about him at the park, with its desolate expanses of untrimmed lawn and wild-growing trees; at the old mansion opposite him, sad and untenanted; and this prospect, the lonely beauty of which had

charmed him but a few hours before, now seemed to him chill and repelling; later he felt as though he could have refused a thousand such castles one after the other, and so, putting the parchment in his pocket, he said quietly: "Let it be five years, father. This is the 20th September, 1854; on the 20th September, 1859, we will destroy this deed and make a new one. I shall remember the date."

"Amen," answered Manuel Gerold fervently.

It was now about five o'clock; and the great resolution being taken, the father and his two sons walked leisurely in the direction of the lodge-gates, where Madame Maboule had promised to be in waiting for them. On their way they talked on the subject which naturally engrossed the young men most for the moment, the history of the Hautbourgs past and gone. Manuel Gerold spoke of the time when he had last seen that park, some sixty years before, on the night when his father was arrested as a Royalist, and he himself and his brother were spirited away through a side-door, whilst five or six hundred peasants, led on by a local ragamuffin, attacked the castle and plundered all they could find in it. He remembered the dismal coach that had come to fetch the Marquis away, the gloomy flashing of the gendarmes' swords in the torch-light, the exulting yells of the rabble at seeing the nobleman manacled like a felon, and the desperate, heroic attempt made by a few of the tenants, who loved their master, to rescue him from the hands of his captors. It was by the efforts of these tenants that the Marquis's two sons had been saved from being arrested like him. The tenants had used force, for the boys wished to go with their father, and Manuel Gerold recollected a rough, devoted farmer who had gagged him with his hand to prevent him screaming. Then there was talk of the bloody assize that had been held in the old town-hall at Hautbourg by one of Robespierre's judges; of the destruction of all the monuments and memorials that could in any way recall the great family of Clairefontaine, of the pillage of the church, and its conversion into a granary, and of the sale of Clairefontaine by the Republican Government to a Radical attorney, for a few thousand francs. When the family returned at the Restoration this attorney, who had already made a colossal fortune, asked for five million francs to surrender the estate, and it was generally credited that he would have insisted upon double had he not had strong reasons for apprehending that the Duke would have him out and shoot him. "See there," continued Manuel Gerold, stopping and pointing with

his stick to a moss-covered grotto, of the sort without which no great park was complete a hundred years ago. "I remember as if it was yesterday my poor father sitting there in powdered wig and ruffles, and teaching me to spell words out of the 'Gazette de France' on his knee; the 'Gazette' was the great paper then; it used to reach us twice a week with news from Paris, and was about the size of a pocket-handkerchief." These reminiscences of past times, called up tenderly by the father, listened to religiously by the sons, occupied the party until they reached the end of the avenue, where Madame Maboule, civil and melancholy, was standing with the gate wide open to let them pass.

"Good afternoon, gentlemen," she cried, tremulously, "and may be, sir, if you see Monseigneur, you will tell him how glad we should all be to see him. The place looks like a church-yard now there's nobody there; it does indeed."

Manuel Gerold muttered a few kind words in returning her salutation; and, once outside the gate, turned round to take a last look at the old house and park. His face was perfectly calm, but he said in a low voice, and with an affectionate wave of the hand towards the place where he and his fathers had been born, "Good-by to Clairefontaine; it came honorably into our hands eight centuries ago; our ancestors will not reproach us for having surrendered it honorably."

With these words, the father and his sons walked away, going back, by the same road as they had come, to Hautbourg. On the way, Horace and Emile, by tacit agreement, refrained from speaking any more about Clairefontaine or the past, and their talk was entirely about the immediate future. Both brothers had graduated as licentiates of law, the elder at Paris in 1851, the younger at Liège in 1854, and it had been decided that they should go to Paris at the opening of term in October, to enter themselves at the Bar. Their visit to Clairefontaine and the things they had heard there did not in any way modify these arrangements; but the young men were anxious to induce their father to accompany them, and he had hitherto refused, alleging his intention of returning to Brussels, where most of his old Republican friends were living. They now tried again to shake his determination, but to little purpose.

"No, let me return into my voluntary exile," he said, gently. "My time is over now; if I could do any good I would come; but the Liberals of to-day have need of younger and stronger soldiers than I."

Emile and Horace both protested against this view, and the discussion was carried on

until the three had reached those remarkable lath-and-plaster villas of which mention has been already made. At this point they noticed that for the last couple of hundred yards or so the people they met had eyed them curiously, and been peculiarly sedulous in the matter of hat-raising. The lath-and-plaster dwellings extended about three-quarters of a mile out of the town, and the nearer they drew to Hautbourg, so much the more did the number of the passers-by increase. Every one of them without exception stared, stood aside, and uncovered his head.

"It's evident that we are not *incognito*," observed Horace Gerold; "this comes of putting down one's name in hotel books." A gendarme was coming towards them at that moment; he stared, too, and made a military salute.

"Ah," said the Republican, "that settles the point. It is not Manuel Gerold they are bowing to, but the Duke of Hautbourg." He stopped a moment. "I had not counted upon this," he muttered. "I had hoped that most of the people here were ignorant that Gerold and the Duke were one. It would not do to have a triumphal entry into the town; suppose we retrace our steps and walk about till it gets dark."

But it was too late. On looking round it was perceived a throng of people, to the number of some twenty or thirty, had gathered in the rear, and were following at a respectful distance — not demonstrative, but attentive. Simultaneously another throng, three times as big, loomed on the horizon in front. The fact is, Monsieur Duval of the Hotel de Clairefontaine, startled out of all reticence and composure by the discovery that he was giving hospitality to none other than the famous Duke, who was both the despair and the stock subject of conversation of everybody in the borough, had spent his afternoon in going about from house to house, and proclaiming the stupefying piece of news that "HE, yes HE, had at last come; and was going to dine at the hotel at seven!" The intelligence in so far as regarded the dinner, was not deemed of vast purport, but the other fact about "his having come," flew through the town like wildfire, and was speedily exaggerated into the most positive assertion that "he had come in company with his entire household," the footmen and butlers composing the aforesaid household being most circumstantially described. There were of course people in the crowd who soon declared themselves in a position to give particulars as to the way in which he had come. One had seen the open barouche and four drive up whilst everybody was at luncheon; another had especially noticed the two omnibuses behind

containing the family; a third, declining to keep so important a secret to himself, avowed that he had talked with Monsieur le Duc half an hour, and that Monsieur had told him he was coming to live at Clairefontaine forthwith. Please imagine the sensation!

Immediately, and as though by magic, Hautbourg had become transformed. Silk dresses, buried in lower drawers ever since the fatal "three years ago," were drawn out in hot haste; windows were thrown open and decked with glazed-calico tricolor flags, showy tablecloths, or any other artistic thing that came first to hand; children had their faces washed, much to their disgust, and were hastily sheathed in Sunday clothes; Monsieur le Curé, abruptly apprised of the news whilst he was taking his afternoon nap, rushed with the inspiration of wisdom to the cupboard, where his best cassock hung, and speedily appeared in the market-place, clean-shaven, brushed, with a missal under his arm, and with gloves on; as for Monsieur le Maire, Messieurs of the Municipal Council, and Monsieur the Beadle, they might have been descried, towards six o'clock, standing three deep round the door of the Hôtel de Clairefontaine, silent, august, and prepared to distinguish themselves.

But what shall be said of Monsieur Ballanchu the seedsman, Monsieur Scarpin the boot-maker, and Monsieur Hochepain the tax-gatherer? These three, like honest tradesmen as they were, announced themselves ready to forgive and forget. Monsieur Ballanchu had bought, on credit, a new pair of double-soles from M. Scarpin, and was giving them an airing in honor of the auspicious occasion; Madame Scarpin in scarlet cap-strings was standing at her door, and had supplied herself with two pocket-handkerchiefs, one *utile*, the other *dulce*, i.e. fragrant with Eau-de-Cologne, to be waved when the He and family should pass. As Madame Scarpin was not the only matron, by a hundred or so, who was standing at her door, with cap-strings hoisted and pocket-handkerchief in reserve, you may readily conceive what a fine spectacle the town presented at about the time when He was expected.

At last (it was about 6.30 P. M., and expectation had begun to assume that spasmodic form which reveals itself in treading on one another's toes, and kicking each other's shins) — at last the report flew: "He comes! He comes!" It was quite true; there he came, a little astonished, but perfectly dignified, and walking between his two sons. All three were bareheaded, for everybody was shouting as if he or she had only five minutes more in which to

shout on earth. And the hats and the handkerchiefs — how they shook and fluttered! And the shrill piping of the children, how it rent the air, with the cries of *vive Monsieur le Duc*; whilst, with a mighty thunder like that of a bull of Bashan, Monsieur Ballanchu, purple in the face, was roaring *vive le Duc de Hautbourg et Monsieur le Marquis*. Monsieur le Curé, meek and benign, stood up on tip-toe to obtain a better sight, and raised his shovel-hat high above him as if in apostolic benediction; Monsieur le Maire, Messieurs of the Municipal Council, and Monsieur the Parish Beadle, yelled as nobody had ever heard them yell before; Monsieur Duval, the hotel-keeper, had dressed himself as if for a state-ball, and was smirking radiantly on his door-step, with Mademoiselle Madelon behind, effulgent in a clean gown, a piece of ribbon round her throat, and a brooch somewhere on her bosom. To crown all, and complete the *tableau*, the local force of six policemen and twelve gendarmes were drawn up in a symmetrical semicircle, and seemed disposed to salute. You see, they had not yet received advices from Paris that this Monsieur le Duc was a "Socialist." They simply took their cue from Monsieur le Maire, and, seeing him enthusiastic, were enthusiastic, too, as became good officials.

CHAPTER III.

"VOX POPULI VOX DEL."

THE cheering, saluting, and pocket-handkerchief-waving would have been all very well but for this fact — that they could have no influence whatever on the resolution of the three gentlemen whom they were intended to honor. The eldest of the three bowed very coldly and gravely: the elder of the two brothers, hailed, for the first time in his life, as "Monsieur le Marquis," appeared disposed to treat the matter as a joke; the younger brother kept as serious as his father, and, if any thing, looked contempt for men who could make such servile fuss about people who were perfect strangers to them. It never struck this ingenuous youth that M. Ballanchu, whilst he belloyed with veins distended and blood-shot eyes, had five and twenty unpaid bills ornamenting the inside of his desk at home; and that poor M. Scarpin, for all his zeal in screaming himself hoarse, was sick at heart in fear of approaching bankruptcy.

The noise and excitement continued long

after the Gerolds had entered the hotel, and had been ushered by the obsequious M. Duval into the yellow drawing-room, now blazing with wax-candles and extemporized floral decoration. In the middle of the room stood the table, spread with snowy cloth, and decked with all the available silver plate in the establishment. M. Duval had even gone the length of borrowing an *épergne* from the local jeweller; and the local jeweller, in consenting to the loan, had merely stipulated that one of his shop-boys should be allowed to serve at table disguised as waiter, so as not to lose sight of the precious piece. It was not that he mistrusted Monsieur Duval, but in a town where everybody has become poor, you know, it is best to take one's precautions.

Monsieur Duval had flattered himself upon creating a favorable impression. He had spent ten minutes over the bow of his white tie, twenty in the hands of his neighbor the barber, who had put his hair into curl, fifteen in superintending the toilets of his subordinates, to see that they were as splendid as himself, and forty in planning and arranging with his own deft hands the adornments of the yellow drawing-room as above. It should be added, that he had also invested two twenty-franc pieces in the purchase of the flowers which made such a fine show, and that the *menu* he had devised for M. le Duc's dinner was a thing unique in provincial experience.

The first words of Manuel Gerold — or of M. le Duc, if you like it better — fell upon him, however, like a bucket of iced water upon a glowing fire; for, whilst the crowd were still shouting below, and whilst he, M. Duval, smiling from ear to ear, was assuring his guests that the dinner would be served up in an instant — but that meanwhile, if “*Monseigneur*” * would allow it, M. le Maire of the town, and M. le Curé, together with several other of the officials, would feel honored by being allowed to pay their respects — the Duke, after a moment's whispering with his sons, drew out his watch, and asked a little stiffly: “*Monsieur Duval*, at what time does the last train start for Paris to-night?”

Poor M. Duval, utterly disconcerted at this surprising question, stood stock still, and looked blankly at his interlocutor.

“The last train for — for Paris?” he stammered. “Why, surely *Monseigneur* does not think of going away to-night?”

At any other time Manuel Gerold would have answered kindly, and stated his in-

tentions without reserve; but the stupid acclamations of the crowd, and the cringing, almost dog-like attitude of the persons whom he had seen during the last half-hour, had put him out of humor, so that he replied with a curtness altogether out of keeping with his usual manner: —

“I cannot say what my plans are; but I beg, *Monsieur Duval*, that you will not call me *Monseigneur* any more. If you have ever heard any thing about me, you must be aware that I am a Republican, and that, consequently, I admit no differences of rank, but such as exist between men who are honest and those who are not.”

As a Frenchman, M. Duval understood this speech at once. He bowed silently, and staggered out of the room — professedly to fetch a time-table, virtually to hide the confusion and chagrin which were overwhelming him with a sense that all was lost, and that the new Duke was indeed a Radical!

As soon as he was gone, the Gerolds held a rapid conference, and decided that they must go that night, and not risk any interviews with mayors or vicars. There was nothing in Manuel Gerold of the charlatanry of Republicanism; and he felt not the slightest ambition to proclaim aloud to the world why it was that he forsook *Clairefontaine*. His sons thought as he did; the demonstrative homage of the worthy *Hautbourgeois* had too pecuniary a ring in it to cause them any elation. They had seen in their father, a few years before, carried in triumph by several thousand electors, who cheered lustily, not the name or the purse, but the man; and the present exhibition seemed to them humiliatingly mean in comparison.

M. Duval re-entered in a few minutes, woe-stricken in demeanor, and freighted with a time-table. Behind him he left the door open, and on handing the table to Manuel Gerold, appeared to hesitate timidly, as though he had something to ask, but dared not. Outside on the landing there was a sound of whispering, with slight shuffling of feet, and down below in the street, the cries *vive Monsieur le Duc! vive Monsieur le Marquis! &c.*, were being uttered enthusiastically and perseveringly as ever.

Manuel Gerold took the time-table, marked the look of trepidation on the host's rueful face, and was about to ask the reason, when he was spared the trouble; for before M. Duval had said a word, the door left ajar was thrown wide open, and in sailed *Monsieur le Maire*, M. le Curé, as many of the Municipal Council as could squeeze in after him, M. Ballanchu the seedsman, M. Scarpin the bootmaker, M.

* *Monseigneur* simply means “my lord,” and was used before 1789 in addressing all very great noblemen. Nowadays it is reserved for princes of the blood, and church dignitaries, archbishops, bishops, &c. Loyal tenants, however, like M. Duval, will still call their noble masters “*Monseigneur*.”

Hochepain the tax-gatherer, and some half-dozen more *ejusdem farinae*, inquisitive, awe-stricken, and respectful. To prevent all chances of rebuff, M. le Maire had brought with him his daughter, a damsel of fifteen summers, attired in white as if for confirmation, and armed with a bouquet about a yard in circumference. The whole procession advanced a couple of steps into the room, and bowed like a single counsellor. Then the damsel, being nudged forward by her father, stepped out reddening, and presented the bouquet.

It was to the old man she offered it. He had risen, together with Horace and Emile; and, as the child came to him, he laid a hand kindly on her head.

"To whom is it you are giving these flowers, my child?" he asked: "to Manuel Gerold, or to the Duke of Hautbourg?"

This question had not been foreseen in the full-dress rehearsal of the performance which Monsieur le Maire had gone through down below with his daughter, so the excellent magistrate immediately hastened to the rescue. He had mentally prepared a short, but effective speech, treating of the importance of the nobility in the social scale, the dangers of anarchy, the Imperial dynasty, the salutary blending of liberty and order, and the price of wheat — topics all bearing more or less on the return of the new Duke. Losing his presence of mind, however, at the critical moment, he began his remarks by an allusion to the Crusades, addressing Manuel Gerold as "*Monsieur le Duc, fils illustre d'une race de Croisés.*"

The Republican at once cut him short.

"Mr. Mayor," he said gently, but firmly, "I am sincerely thankful, both to yourself and your fellow-townsmen, for the friendly greeting you have given my sons and me to-day; but I should be glad to learn that this welcome of yours has not been offered under a misapprehension. If you have greeted me simply as the descendant of a family long connected with your town, then thank you most gratefully again and again; but if you have welcomed me under the belief that I was coming to assume any new character, I think it right to tell you that certain private arrangements which I am compelled to make will prevent my ever standing towards you in the same relation as did my late nephew."

Here were all the new-born hopes of Hautbourg nipped in the bud. There was a long murmur, with whispers and sighs from everybody, except M. Hochepain the tax-gatherer, who, to the indignation of his brethren, cried energetically: "Hear, hear," under a wrong impression. He was sternly called to order by M. Ballanchu,

and, whilst this little episode was being enacted in the hindmost ranks of the assemblage, near the door, M. le Curé, brushing his shovel-hat nervously with the sleeve of his cassock, and beaming unutterable entreaty through the glasses of his honest spectacles, trotted forward and undertook to plead the cause of his sorrowing parishioners. He was a worthy ecclesiastic, and made the most of his point. The sense of diminished church-dues was so strong within him that he would have been eloquent in the face of a king, how much more then in the presence of the man with whom it lay to restore prosperity to the borough, and so, indirectly, to replenish the coffers of the parish church. He quoted Maccabees, the Book of Ezekiel, and the parable of the man who buried his talents in a napkin. He marshalled in array St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Augustine of Hippo, and St. John Chrysostom. He adduced the sufferings of St. Simeon Stylites on his pillar, St. Laurence on his gridiron, and St. Andrew of Utica, who perished by fish-hooks. And all this he did with so much unction and zeal as to excite the secret envy of the Mayor, the wonder of the Municipal Council, the admiration of M. Ballanchu, and, indeed, of everybody save that unlucky M. Hochepain, who, being always out of his reckoning, and having still present to his mind the angry rebuke of the seedsman, took it upon himself to exclaim, "No, no," just when such an expression of opinion on his part was most unfelicitous. Happily, M. le Curé was too deep in his own harangue to hear, for he was just then closing with a masterly peroration, depicting the horrors of famine and the remorse which must necessarily overtake the rich man who allowed his poor brethren to die of hunger. This last form of appeal was only ventured on as an extreme resort, for, as a general rule, M. le Curé had much greater faith in the salvation of rich brethren than of poor ones. He had had occasion to notice that it was the rich who went oftenest to church and put most into the plate.

A great pity that so much eloquence should have missed its effect, but it did. Manuel Gerold's words in answer were few, but they sounded to the good priest like so many thwacks with a cane. The Republican observed that he had never contemplated letting anybody die of hunger; that his annual subscription of 20,000 francs for the poor of Hautbourg would be continued, and even added to if it were insufficient; that he would instruct the agent not to press for rent those who really could not afford to pay, and that if any person in Hautbourg had met with misfortune which it was possible to relieve by extra donations, he would

do his best to help him. This said, however, he made one of those coldly polite inclinations of the head by which kings, cabinet-ministers, and people who are bored, intimate their wish to end an interview. The hint was taken with dismay by the curé, with consternation by the mayor and council, with suppressed mutterings by MM. Ballanchu, Scarpin and Co., and with philosophical indifference by M. Hochepain, who, having never understood from the first why he had come up stairs, was not much surprised to find himself going down again.

Everybody bowed on backing out as on coming in, and it was the crest-fallen M. Duval who held the door open. Three-quarters of an hour after the desponding deputation had made its exit, the strangers themselves were gone. Finding that a train left for Paris soon after eight, they had galloped through M. Duval's munificent dinner, or, rather, through a quarter of it, and so stabbed the professional self-esteem of that honest innkeeper, as well as dashed down his hopes. Not even the 500-franc note with which the Republican generously paid him his bill was enough to make him forget the accumulation of so much bitterness in a single day.

Manuel Gerold and his sons set out on foot to go to the station, but though the market-place and the streets were still crowded, they were not cheered this time as they had been an hour or two before. The ill news brought down from the yellow drawing-room by M. le Maire, M. le Curé, and authorities, had spread pretty fast, and as the three gentlemen appeared at the door of the hotel, first one individual, then another who had caught sight of them, proffered a cat-call or derisive whistle—(remember, darkness had set in, and it was easy to whistle without being seen). These isolated marks of disfavor were like the single squibs that are fired off at the commencement of a firework entertainment. Gradually, they increased in number, in strength, and in noise, just as the sky-rockets that come after the squibs. "*A bas les Républicains!*" "*A la fosse les Socialistes!*" "*A la lanterne les Rouges!*" Such were the amenities which this lively mob delivered. In a minute or two the cries, cat-calls, whistles, and kind wishes had become general. Everybody—man, woman, and child—contributed his or her obijurgation to the cheerful total, and the three Gerolds were eventually escorted to the station by a closely-packed rabble, screaming, yelping, hooting, and barking, "*A la fosse!*" "*A la lanterne!*" "*A la potence!* (gibbet)" &c. One gentleman, thinking probably that this exhibition of feeling was scarcely forcible enough for a

practical age, snatched up a stone close to the station and threw it at the group (it struck Manuel Gerold's shoulder), exclaiming, "*Sales Proscrits, pouah!*"

"Ignoble dogs!" cried Horace Gerold, facing round with his fists clenched in indignant scorn.

But his father gently withheld his arm. "Must we take angry men at their word?" he said. "These don't mean what they say."

"*C'est égal,*" muttered the young man between his teeth; "this is my first lesson in democracy, and if all crowds are like this"—

"But they're not," put in his father, earnestly.

CHAPTER IV.

ANNO DOMINI M.DCCC.LIV.

WHILST the three Gerolds are being whirled along towards Paris, each musing in the strain peculiar to him on the ups and downs of popular favor, it will not be amiss if we take a bird's-eye survey of the year 1854, which was to be a starting-point in the lives of the two young men.

In 1854, France had already been rather more than two years in the enjoyment of its Second Empire, and people who had sworn eternal fidelity to past dynasties, had had abundant time to forget that such had ever existed, that here there were three great topics of interest in the Parisian papers: the Crimean war, the sensation drama, *Les Cosaques*, by MM. Arnault and Judicis; and the Cholera. Lord Raglan and Marshal St. Arnaud, Admiral Hamelin and Rear-Admiral Dundas, MM. Arnault and Judicis (afore-mentioned), and Dr. Trousseau (on account of the cholera), were seven popular men. Monsieur Jullien—who had organized some promenades concerts in London, and composed a quadrille called the *Allied Armies*, during the performance of which some warriors in red and some others in blue were to be seen emerging from behind a curtain playing a medley of *Rule Britannia* and *Parlant pour la Syrie*—was also a popular man. For the first time since the invention of printing the term *braves alliés* was being advantageously substituted for that of *Milords Godam* in the current literature which treated of Englishmen, and there were pictures of French Zouaves warmly embracing Scotch Highlanders in most of the engraving-shops of the capital. The

nick-name for His Majesty the Emperor Nicholas was in London "*Old Nick*," and in Paris *le Gros Colas*; there was likewise a sobriquet for Prince Menschikoff, who was styled *le Prince Thermomètre* — a somewhat mysterious joke, but which was generally understood to mean that the Russian captain's chance of thrashing *les braves Français* depended much more upon Generals Frost and Snow than upon any proficiency of his own in the science of warfare.

In order to diffuse a healthy patriotism amongst the lower orders, the Imperial Government had taken care that there should be no lack of seasonable reading, and husky gentlemen patrolled the Boulevards selling songs and pamphlets, in which one found many unpleasant things about Ivan the Terrible, who cut off the ears of his courtiers, and about Alexander, who sent French prisoners of war to work in the mines of Ural, and fed them on tallow-candles. For the more intellectual portion of the community who might have been sceptical about the candles, the publishers of the late M. de Custine had brought out a new edition of his famous Russian book; and for clubs and cafés, where the frivolous abound, M. Gustave Doré, then budding into fame, had prepared a comic and pictorial "*Histoire de la Sainte Russie*," in which the death of every alternate Czar, by poison, was most graphically and instructively portrayed. To tell the truth, this war was a godsend, for, if there had been no dead and wounded to harangue about, no Czar to cut jokes at, and no Muscovites to punnelt, who knows but that the French might have turned their ever-lively attention to that new Constitution, which had just been elaborated, and devoted some of their superfluous energy to knocking it to pieces? But one thing at a time is enough for Frenchmen — happily. They only pull Constitutions to bits when they have nothing else to do; and in 1854, being fully employed with other talk, they let the Constitution alone. Besides, most of the workmen who were good at knocking to pieces, were out of the way. MM. Bianqui and Barbés, the heroes of the 15th May insurrection in 1848, were under lock and key. MM. Ledru Rollin and Louis Blanc were across the channel. M. Victor Hugo, majestic and gloomy, was inspecting the ocean from the top of his Belvedere at Guernsey, and defiantly muttering verses from his "*Napoléon le Petit*." MM. Thiers and Guizot, possibly not over-satisfied with the pretty day's work they had accomplished when they smashed the Orleans throne into splinters in fighting between them for the keeping of it, were indulging in solitary reflections — the one in his own home at Val

Richer, the other in Germany. M. Eugène Sue, the Socialist in kid-gloves, great at depicting virtue in corduroys, was fretting away the last years of his life at Annecy; and Dr. Raspail, another revolutionary hero, who eschewed kid-gloves but believed in the panaceal properties of camphor, was smoking cigarettes of that compound in retirement at Brussels; M. Pierre Leroux, the bogey of French mass-going matrons, had disappeared, no one knew whither, taking his materialist doctrines with him; and Generals Cavaignac, Lamoricière, and Changarnier — those modern Curiatii, outwitted and conquered by the Imperial Horatius — were chewing the cud of bitter meditation — very bitter — and shooting partridges to console themselves.

As for the minor operatives in the knocking-to-pieces trade, there were eleven thousand of them at Cayenne, two thousand at Lambessa, and five thousand in Africa. M. Frédéric Cournet, who had commanded the barricade of the Faubourg du Temple in June '48, had lately been killed in a duel near Windsor by his brother revolutionist, Barthélemy who had commanded the barricade of the Faubourg St. Antoine; and Barthélemy, himself was giving fencing-lessons in London, pending the time when he should be hanged at Newgate for murdering his landlord and a policeman. Thus, opposition, liberalism, and all unpleasantness of that sort, had been happily removed. Such Radicals as remained in Paris held their tongues, and it was only at the Bar (where, amongst others, a young barrister of twenty-eight, named M. Emile Ollivier, was remarkable for the vehemence of his Republicanism) that one could ever hear any thing like a subversive speech, delivered generally in defence of some miserable journalist brought up for punishment.

To give a civilized look to the new Empire, and make every thing regular, there was a Corps Législatif, composed of two hundred and sixty members, and a Senate, composed of a hundred and twenty; who wore, the Deputies, blue swallow-tails with silver braiding, and the Senators, black swallow-tails with gold ditto. The cost of them to the nation for salaries, refreshments, &c., was about half a million sterling. They debated on an average sixty hours a session with closed doors, not a single reporter being suffered to disturb them; and, as they were all invariably of one mind, their deliberations were characterized by that blessed harmony which should always prevail in Christian assemblies. The daily press, in 1854, was no longer — heaven be praised! — the turbulent, unmanageable thing it had been a few years previously. There were three journals

—"Patrie," "Constitutionnel," and "Pays" — which sang the praises of the Imperial dynasty every evening, and though, it is true, there were three or four more that declined to join in this concert, yet these were ill-conditioned papers, which were perpetually getting into trouble, and which M. de Persigny, the Home Minister, doctored with whip and thong, like a liberal and wise statesman as he was. As for the "Charivari" and kindred prints, they cut their capers under difficulties. Imagine a quadrille where each of the dancers has a piece of chain and a ten-pound shot riven to the ankle of his right leg.

Architecturally speaking, Paris was not yet the vast Haussmannville it has become since; but the trowel-wielding Baron was just come into office, and pickaxe, hod, and brick-cart were already on the move. Every willing citizen who was not required for exterminating Russians found employment to his fill in demolishing dwelling-places.

It was known amongst tax-payers that the Rue de Rivoli was going to be prolonged, so that there might be one straight line from the Place de la Concorde to that of the Bastille; that a new Tribunal of Commerce was to be built in the heart of the once pestilential Cité, where policemen of old had never ventured without quaking; that the old Théâtre Lyrique and Théâtre du Châtelet were coming down, and that new ones would soon be erected in their stead, furnished with all modern appliances of luxury, and with actually room enough in the stalls for people to sit in. That M. Alphand, the new Prefect's chief engineer and *fidus Achates*, had taken the Bois de Boulogne in hand, and was bent upon transforming it into a fairy garden, which it should need only five-and-twenty million francs a year to keep in order: that the plans of five new barracks, three new boulevards, seven new mairies, four new squares, and seventeen new churches, were being prepared on a right royal scale, regardless of expense; and that to pay for all these things there would, in all probability, be more taxes next year. And yet such is the admirable effect of the whip and thong in subduing the human mind and making it supple, that nobody grumbled much; though M. de Rambuteau, who had been Prefect of the Seine under Louis Philippe, remembered the time when the whole city had uttered piercing cries, and groaned aloud and predicted national ruin, because he, M. de Rambuteau, had insisted upon building the wretched meagre street which bears his name.

Truly a great change had come over men in the course of three years, and one could

notice the effects of it everywhere. If you entered a café in the year 1854, you were no longer deafened, as 1848, '49, and '50, by the astounding clamor of citizens discussing across a table whether Cavaignac was a greater man than Lamartine, or Lamartine a greater man than Cavaignac, or M. Odillon Barrot a greater man than either. From prudential motives the investigation of these interesting problems had been momentarily shelved. There were gentlemen to be seen in the cafés, who walked very erect, and had small eyes, and were particularly affable in conversation. Unfortunately, it had been remarked that those who confided their political impressions to these engaging strangers were seldom long before they were summoned to explain them at greater length to M. le Juge d'Instruction at the Palais de Justice, and this had no doubt something to do with the extremely taciturn, not to say unbrotherly demeanor, which men evinced towards each other in Parisian cafés during the year '54. There was a good deal of the same sort of danger in clubs. It was not the most agreeable thing in the world to be suddenly interrupted in a mantle-shelf conversation by a gentleman with a firm beak-nose and a red rosette in his button-hole, who would suddenly spring up from an opposite end of the room and say, with grim courtesy, hat in hand, "I think I heard Monsieur express an opinion adverse to the *coup d'état*, in which I had the honor to participate. Will Monsieur be so obliging as to name a friend?"

In nine cases out of ten, your adversary was one of his Majesty's officers, grateful for past favors, and hopeful by display of zeal to merit a continuance of the same. He would take you out at six o'clock A.M. to the Bois de Vincennes, and there run you through with amazing adroitness and satisfaction. Under the circumstances, it was as well to avoid political topics, and to talk in a lyrical strain, either about the glories of war or the ravages of the cholera — taking care to add, however, if one selected this last subject, that the cholera was not half so fatal under the present as under preceding reigns, as was triumphantly proved by the fact that M. Casimir Péreire, Prime Minister of Louis Philippe, had died of cholera, whereas, no such catastrophe had ever befallen a minister of Napoleon, nor was likely to.

But let us not be unjust towards the Imperial régime. One was not entirely confined for conversation to the war and the cholera; there were other topics upon which one might venture with more or less safety. For instance, one could speak of the monster Hotel du Louvre, which was

being completed, much to the dismay of surrounding hostellers; of the barn-like building in the Champs-Élysées, which was destined for the International Exhibition of 1855, and which (this in a whisper, for fear of beak-noses) contrasted unfavorably with Sir Joseph Paxton's edifice that adorned Hyde Park in '51; of the beauty of the new Empress, Mdle. Eugénie de Téba, and of the intention attributed to her of importing the *mantilla* at Court; of the fashions of the year, — to wit, frogged coats, striped trousers, and curly-brimmed hats for gentlemen; three-flounced dresses, hair à l'*Impératrice*, and spoon-bill bonnets for ladies; of the thin face of M. Magne, Minister of Finance, and the plump face of M. Baroche, Minister of Justice; of the beard movement raging like an epidemic in England, and the consequent depression in the razor-trade; of Mdle. Anna Thillon, the star of the Opéra Comique, of whom the critics unanimously wrote that she looked like an angel and sang like a peacock; of Dr. Véron, deputy for Paris and editor of the "Constitutionnel," his renowned *cordon bleu* Sophie and his legendary shirt-collars, more stiff and formidable than the shirt-collars of any other man of letters from Dunkirk to Bayonne; of M. de Tocqueville, the witty and thoughtful, who was writing his book, "L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution," and M. Augustin Thierry, the scholarly, who was busy at his "Histoire du Tiers Etat;" of the Académie Française, grave and learned body, which professed to ignore Béranger, and which, in the course of the year, mourned five of its members — Tissot, the *savant*; Antonin Jay, the founder of the "Constitutionnel;" Ancelot, the author of "Louis XI.;" Baour Lormian, the translator of "Tasso;" and the polished Marquis de Saint Aulaire, historian of the Fronde; of the price of oysters, which cost ten centimes the dozen more than in '53, and of the scarcity of truffles on the markets of Périgord; of M. Scribe the playwright, whose eternal young widows and colonels were decidedly beginning to be found stale; and of Mdme. Émile de Girardin's new comedie, "La Joie fait Peur" and "Le Chapeau d'un Horloger" (the last two she ever wrote), which all Paris was flocking to see; of Alfred de Musset, whose once brilliant genius was almost extinguished, and of Alexandre Dumas, who was as prolific in novels as ever; of Dumas the younger, whose recent success with "La Dame aux Camélias" was still in everybody's mouth, and of Mdme. Doche, who played the part of Marguerite Gautier in that drama so touchingly, that the ladies in the boxes used to sob, whilst the gentlemen in the stalls would cough, and

— when nobody was looking — dash their hands across their eyes; of Italy and Italians, notably of Silvio Pellico, who was dying at Turin, broken down by his imprisonment in the Spielberg, and of Daniel Manin, ex-dictator of Venice, who was giving music-lessons in Paris; of a new sort of glove lately imported from England, called dogskin, generally voted hideous, but worn nevertheless because it was British; and of the exorbitant price of articles in Russian leather, owing to the cessation of trade with the Czar's dominions; of M. de Villèle, the celebrated Prime Minister of Louis XVIII., who died during the year, unremembered and almost unknown, from having spent a quarter of a century in retirement (*sic transit gloria mundi!*); of M. le Comte d'Aberdeen, who was Premier in England, and Monsieur Franklin Pierce, the orator, who was President of the United States; of certain English words which were making their way bravely into the French language, such as *steeple-chase*, *lonch*, *ponch*, and *high-life*, the latter of which was pronounced as if it rhymed with *fig-leaf*; of the vintage of the year, which was good, and the crops, which were less so; of Alma and Balaclava, Inkermann and Sebastopol, with discussions as to whether one should say Sebas- or Sevas-topol; of M. de Morny's dinners and Mdme. de Persigny's suppers; of Ravel and Grassot, Bressant and Rachel; of the end of the world, which some French Dr. Cumming had announced as irrevocably fixed for the 13th of June, 1857; and of a new establishment of Turkish baths, which had been inaugurated as a novelty on the Boulevard du Temple, and which a popular journalist, M. Nestor Roqueplan, recommended as a sovereign cure to nephews who wished to get rid of their uncles.

Such, amongst others, were the topics of current talk in Paris in the year 1854, at the time when Horace and Émile Gerold came there to try their fortunes.

CHAPTER V.

BOURGEOIS POLITICS.

"WELL, I think we've about done our furnishing," said Horace to his brother, as he stepped back to look at a long row of law volumes which he had been ranging on a book-shelf.

"Yes," answered Émile, "both our studies are in order: the man has finished nailing down the carpets in the bedrooms. I don't see what else remains to be done."

"Where have you put the tin box?" asked Horace.

"Here it is," said Emile, picking up a small tin case from out a litter of torn newspapers, bits of string, empty boxes and wood-shavings that encumbered the floor. "What's in it?"

"Don't you know?" exclaimed the elder, looking at him. "It's that title-deed; I put it there when we came from Clairefontaine six weeks ago."

"Oh!" rejoined Emile, becoming serious, and he added after a moment: "What are you going to do with it?"

"We must find a place for the thing somewhere where we sha'n't be seeing it every day," returned Horace, perplexed. "I heartily wish it were off our hands; I dream about it nights. It is inconceivable that father should have wished us to keep such a thing five years."

"There's an empty drawer in your bureau," remarked Emile, not answering the latter half of his brother's observation.

Horace was holding the case in his two hands and eying it rather absently. "H'm, no," he said, at the end of a moment's reflection: "suppose *you* keep it? I shall feel quieter if it's in your charge."

The younger brother took the case without making any remark, and carried it into the next room, which was his own study. Horace heard the opening of a drawer, and the double clicking of a lock. Then Emile re-appeared with a key in his hand. "If that can make you any easier," he said, "the thing's done. I've put it in my lowest drawer, left-hand side, and we need never look at it again unless you like."

Horace drew a short sigh of relief and gave a nod of thanks to Emile. After which, as the brothers wanted to set their rooms to rights, they fell to picking up the rubbish, wood-shavings, bits of string, shreds of paper, &c., and piled them into the empty deal boxes, preparatory to having these removed to a lumber-room.

It was during a November afternoon, and the two Gerolds were just installed in the lodgings they had taken, Rue St. Geneviève, in the "Latin Quarter," close to the Panthéon. Their father had some weeks since returned to Brussels; in fact he had done no more than pass through Paris, for, as he said with truth enough, the France of '54 was not a place for men who thought as he did. Manuel Gerold had no private fortune save that which had come to him at his nephew's death; but in the course of a long and laborious career as a political writer he had amassed sufficient to end his own days in ease and to start his sons in life comfortably. He could afford to

give them three thousand francs a year apiece, which is a competence in Paris for young barristers who have not extravagant tastes; and, as the Council of the French Bar requires that a man shall have "a decently furnished lodging and a library of books" before he can be admitted to plead, he had spent twelve thousand francs in fitting up the chambers of Horace and Emile, so that Monsieur le Bâtonnier and his colleagues should have no fault to find. The brothers rented a set of rooms on the third floor — one of those good old sets of rooms built a hundred and fifty years ago, with thick walls, deep cupboards, and roomy passages; not like those wretched card-board dwellings which M. Haussmann's architects have contrived — houses where, if the first-floor lodger plays the piano at midnight, he is heard on the sixth story, and keeps some ten or twelve batches of fellow-tenants awake. Horace and Emile had each a study and a bedroom to themselves; and for their joint use there was a kitchen and dining-room, the latter of which, however, as they seldom dined at home, they had converted into a smoking saloon. There was also a cellar for wine, wood, and coal; and if it would interest you to know what all this cost, I may tell you that their combined rent amounted to eight hundred francs, that is, double what they would have had to pay before 1848, and a third less than they would be obliged to pay in 1870.

Clubs being as yet confined in France to men who are rich and can afford to do without them, the brothers dined and breakfasted at one of those *tables d'hôte* so numerous in the Latin Quarter, where young barristers, journalists, doctors, professors, and the better class of students resort. The board cost eighty-five francs a month, *vin ordinaire* included; and for that sum one had a very fair beefsteak or chop, an omelette, fried potatoes, and cheese at eleven, and soup, boiled beef, roast, vegetables, and dessert at six. Certainly the French are adepts in the art of giving *multum pro parvo*. It is impossible to surmise without chagrin what dinner would be given in Great Britain to any individual who expected his six courses *per diem* for sixty-eight shillings a month.

One thousand and twenty francs paid for board and 400 francs for lodging, left each brother 1,580 francs annually for firing and lighting, washing, clothes, and pocket-money. Set down the first two of these items at 100 francs (for between two coal can be eked out), the second at 150 francs, the third at 400 francs, and there remained 930 francs for the last. A young French barrister who has 37*l.* a year for

pocket-money may consider himself favored by Providence. There is no reason why he should deny himself the diurnal *demoiselle* at his café; he can smoke cigarettes at the rate of one pound of tobacco per month (total 60 francs per annum); on festive occasions he may wear gloves and venture upon a cigar (N.B. a *Londrès*, price 25 centimes, as good as a London regalia if carefully selected); he may also indulge without fear in a cab, if not over addicted to parties; and he will still have a reserve-fund for the exhilaration of beggars, the remuneration of the *concierge* who blackens his boots, makes his bed, and sweeps his room, and for an occasional summer's day excursion to Enghien or Montmorency, should his fancy so lead him. Of course, theatre-going should cost him nothing. Every barrister contrives to know a few journalists, dramatic authors and actors, upon whom he may depend for play-orders — especially during the dog-days.

The house in which Horace and Emile had taken up their abode was the property of a worthy draper named Pochemolle, who kept a shop on the ground floor, and was accounted somewhat a curiosity in the parish. The curiosity lay in this, that the Pochemolles, from father to son, had occupied the house where they then lived for upwards of a hundred and seventy years — a fact so rare, so phenomenal indeed, in the annals of Parisian trade, that certain of M. Pochemolle's customers, unable to grasp the notion in its entirety, had a sort of confused belief that it was M. Achille Pochemolle himself — the Pochemolle of 1854 — who had flourished a hundred and seventy years on the same premises. Yet M. Achille Pochemolle was not more than fifty; and he looked by no means older than his age. He was a small, smug-faced, gooseberry-eyed man, quick in his movements, glib with his tongue, and full of the quaint shop-courtesy of eighty years ago, which he had inherited from his sire and his sire's sire along with their profound veneration for all that concerned the crown, the nobility, and the higher clergy.

It was worth going a visit to the Rue Ste. Geneviève if only to see M. Pochemolle bow when he ushered out a customer or showed one in. He still kept to all the musk-scented traditions of the *grand siècle*. For him, a lady, no matter how old and wrinkled, was always a *belle dame*; and Heaven forbid that he should ever have driven a hard bargain with one of the gentle sex. He used to say, "*Voyez, belle dame, cette étoffe est faite pour vous embellir*," or, "*Belle dame, ce ruban ne peut qu'ajouter à vos grâces*." Ladies liked it, and M. Pochemolle had a fine business connection

amongst ancient dowagers and spinsters of the neighborhood: not to mention two or three nunneries, the sisters of which, pleased to be addressed occasionally in pretty old-world compliments, came to Monsieur P.'s for all that was wanted in the way of linen and drapery for their convents.

In politics M. Pochemolle was a valiant conservative of existing institutions, whatever they were, and, under the circumstances, it might have seemed odd that he should have consented to lodge the sons of a notorious Republican, had it not been for this, that he was under obligations to Manuel Gerold, and frequently acknowledged it with gratitude. As a private first, then as a corporal, and finally as a sergeant in the National Guard, Monsieur P. — had fired his shot in the three insurrections of July, 1830; February, '48; and June, '48; fighting each time on the side of order — that is, on the side of Government; and it was in the last of these battles that, finding himself under the same flag as Manuel Gerold — who was for a moderate Republic, opposed to a "Red" one — he had been saved from certain death by the latter, who, at the risk of his own life, had caught up Monsieur Pochemolle from under a barricade where he was lying stunned, and carried him away to a place of safety. The honest draper, who set a high price on his own life, thought with wonder and admiration of this achievement. He had sworn a lasting gratitude to his preserver, and seemed likely not to forget his oath; for, when Horace and Emile Gerold came with their father to see whether M. Pochemolle had any lodgings to let, he had gladly given them the best he had, without troubling himself about their political opinions. He even went further, for he spread it amongst his own purveyors, grocer, coal-man, and others, that his two new lodgers were young gentlemen "who might be trusted;" and, on the November afternoon, when the brothers were setting their rooms to rights, he came up to see with his own eyes whether they had every thing they wanted, taking with him as his pretext a letter which the postman had just brought for Horace Gerold.

"Come in," cried the brothers, in answer to the good man's knock, and M. Pochemolle with his letter, his gooseberry eyes, and his excellent tongue ready for half an hour's chat, appeared in the doorway.

"A letter, gentlemen," he said; "and I've come to see whether I can be of use to you. Deary me! but these are fine rooms and improved vastly since you're in them. This is a Brussels carpet, five francs twenty-five centimes the *mètre*: I know it by the tread. Nothing can be better than

those crimson curtains, solid cloth of Elbauf, cost a hundred and fifty francs the pair, I'll warrant me. And that's a portrait of your most respected father over the mantle-piece?"

"Yes," smiled Horace, taking the letter and laying it on the table. "Our father has a great esteem for you, Monsieur Pochemolle."

"Not more than I have for him, sir," answered the draper heartily, and, peering into the next room, which was Emile's, he continued: "And that, no doubt, is Madame your most venerated mother?" The picture was one of a fair-haired lady, with tender, expressive eyes. The brothers had scarcely known their mother; she had died when they were both children. They nodded and kept silent.

"Ha," went on Monsieur Achille, changing the subject with ready tact. "These pictures remind me of two of mine own which I must show you down stairs. One is a print made in 1710 (a hundred and forty-four years ago), the other is more recent—1780; both represent a part of the Rue Ste. Geneviève, and you can see my shop in them, not altered a bit from what it is now, with the name Pochemolle over the doorway, and the sign of 'The Three Crowns.' These three crowns, you must know, were the making of our house. Ah, Messieurs, it's a fine story, and you should have heard my grandfather tell it as he had it from his own grandfather, the hero of the tale. Just about as old as you, Monsieur Horace, he was. Then my great-great-grandfather—one day he was walking along the streets, when he sees a poor woman, worn away with hunger, and two little children on her arms, make a snatch at the purse of a fine gentleman who was stepping out of a coach, and try to run off with it. The two were so near together—he and the woman—that the servants of the gentleman laid hold of him, thinking it was he that had made the snatch; the more so as the crazy thing, in her hurry to get away, had tripped up and let go the purse, which was lying at my ancestor's feet. Of course, this took him breathless like, and he was just going to say what was what, when, looking at the poor creature who was crouching on the ground shaking all over, and clasping her two babies close to her, he couldn't bear giving her up, and so says he: 'Yes, gentlemen, it's I that took the purse.'

"It seems the woman gave him such a look as he never forgot to the day when he was laid in his coffin, and he used to say that it was worth going ten times to the gallows to have eyes look at one as her's did. You see, thieving was no joke then :

it meant the gibbet; and it wasn't everybody that would have run their necks in a noose for a beggar woman they didn't know. Well, they dragged him off to prison, locked him up with chains to his legs, they did; and my grandsire made up his mind that before long they'd have him out on the Place de Grève, and do by him as I dare say he'd seen done by a many a thief and cut-throat. But the gentleman whose purse had been snatched had seen the whole thing, and wasn't going to let evil come of it. He allowed the young man to lie in prison a little while, just to see, probably, how long he would hold out; but when he saw that my grandsire wouldn't budge an inch from his story, but stuck firm to it that it was he that had taken the purse, then he spoke out, and one day came to the jail with a king's order for letting the prisoner loose. He was a great nobleman, was this gentleman—one of the greatest about Louis the Fourteenth's court; and when my grandsire came out of prison—it was the Châtelet; they're building a theatre over the spot now—he saw this great nobleman, who didn't bare his head to many, standing, hat in hand, beside his coach-door. 'Will you do me the honor of riding to Versailles, sir, with me?' he said—aye, he said, 'do me the honor,' he did—'I wish to present you to the king.' And sure enough to Versailles they went, both together, side by side, he and the nobleman in the same coach; and at court the king gave my ancestor his hand to kiss, and the nobles between them subscribed five hundred *louis*, with which this house and the shop below were bought. And the purse which was the cause of the whole business, and which contained three crowns when it was snatched, was presented to my grandsire by the nobleman, along with a diamond ring. They're both under a glass case in our back parlor now, and I can tell you, gentlemen, we're proud of 'em."

"Well you may be," exclaimed Emile Gerold, warmly. "There's not a nobleman could show a more splendid patent of nobility than that purse and the three crowns."

"And what became of the woman?" asked Horace Gerold.

"Our benefactor took care of her, too. He set her up in a cottage on his country estate, and I believe her sons grew up to be honest peasants. But I don't feel much for her, though," added M. Pochemolle, sagaciously; "for, after all, if the nobleman hadn't had his eyes about him when the thing happened, she'd have let my grandsire swing, which would have been a pretty end for a man that had never fingered :

enny that wasn't his own, and would as soon have thought of thieving as of committing murder."

Whilst speaking, M. Pochemolle strode about the rooms, continuing to inspect everything, feeling the coverings of chairs and sofas with a professional touch, digging his fists into mattresses and pillows to test their elasticity, and closely scrutinizing the wood of which tables and bureaux were made. "I don't want to be talking only about myself, gentlemen," he said bluffly; "let's talk a little about yourselves; the goings-on of an old family a hundred and seventy years ago can't interest you much, though it's civil of you to listen. Hullo, what's this?"

In ferreting about, M. Pochemolle had come upon some framed pictures standing on the floor with their faces to the wall, waiting to be hung up. He took one and turned it to the light. It was a print of David's celebrated picture, *Le Serment du Jeu de Paume*.* Poor M. Pochemolle became suddenly grave.

"No, no," said he, shaking his forefinger before his face and looking reproachfully from one brother to the other. "No, no, no — don't have any thing to do with 'em."

"With whom?" asked Horace, amused.

"With them there," and M. Pochemolle pointed ruefully to the grand figure of the Revolutionist, Bailly, standing with hand uplifted in the foreground of the picture. "They're not fit company for gentlemen like you to associate with," he went on; "no, they ain't, indeed. And if you'd seen as much of 'em as I have, you'd wash your hands of 'em now and for altogether."

"Are you speaking of the Revolutionists?" inquired Emile.

"Ay, sir, I am."

"But come, M. Pochemolle, you were a Republican yourself, not so long ago," observed Horace, laughing. "It was in fighting for the provisional government, that you received the blow on the head which gave our father the opportunity of picking you up, and making your acquaintance."

"Ay, Monsieur, but the blow on the head doesn't prove I was a Republican. When I was a little chap ten years old, no higher than that pair of tongs yonder, I went to the Barrière de Clichy to throw stones at the Cossacks, who were marching into Paris. Throwing stones was the most we could do, for we were too small to fire guns.

Sixteen years later, when M. Lafayette and that set were overthrowing Charles X., I went out and did my best to prevent them. The National Guard was dissolved then, but I put on my uniform all the same and went to join the regulars. I stuck to it three days, July 27, 28, and 29, along with the Royal Guards at the Tuileries; and, if the Bourbons were expelled, it wasn't for want of fighting on my part. In 1848 came our King Louis Philippe's turn, and I was out again, Feb. 23, 24, and 25, never closing an eye once during the three days, and seeing six and thirty men of my company shot down by the Faubourgiens. Well, we were beat, as you know; your respected father and his friends came to power, and there was nothing for it but to rally round them to prevent their being swept away in their turn by the 'Reds.' That's why I fought for them in the three days of June, but it doesn't prove I'm a Republican, for I should do just as much for the Emperor Napoleon if any one were to try and get rid of him."

"H'm, then you can boast with your hand on your heart that you have consistently opposed progress of every sort and kind, and are prepared to do so again," remarked Horace, good-humoredly, but with a small point of irony.

"Ay, sir, I can," answered M. Pochemolle simply, though not without a counter point of irony. "I can, if you think that progress and revolution mean the same thing; but I don't. Let's have order first, I say; then we'll see about the rest afterwards."

"Yet you must have some preference for one form of government over the other," ejaculated Emile, not a little scandalized at this — to him — new way of talking.

"Yes, I like any thing better than a republic," responded M. Pochemolle with deliberation. "See, gentlemen, what is it that we tradesmen most want, — peace, isn't it? — and a good strong government that'll let us sell our wares quietly, and keep the ragamuffins from breaking our windows. Well, when your honored father and his friends were in office, what did we have? I know they were honest men and meant well; but honesty's not enough: it's like butter without the bread: the bread's strength, and we want strength, too. M. Lamartine, M. Louis Blanc, and M. Gerold made us handsome promises, and, I know, did their best to keep them; but what did it all come to? Why, in '48, we paid twice more taxes than we'd ever paid before; we were out four days a week quelling riots, and there was no more business doing than if we'd all been living in famine time. Now under the emperor, I don't say but

* In 1789, Louis XVI., wishing to throw impediments in the way of the sittings of the States-General, who appealed to him to be voting reforms too fast, ordered the debate room at Versailles to be closed, under pretence of repairs. The members thereupon adjourned to the Tennis Court, and there swore a solemn oath not to cease from their work until they had drawn up a new constitution. David's pencil has immortalized this episode.

that the taxes are high; only we can afford to pay them. Trade's been brisker these three years past, spite of the war and that, than I ever remember it before: and we don't have any rioting."

"Oh! if you look at these questions from the counter point of view," interrupted Emile Gerold a little contemptuously.

"Well, sir, don't we all look at things through our particular set of glasses?" rejoined the honest draper roundly. "Here are you two gentlemen come to Paris to start as lawyers, and I am bound I shall hear you both make many a fine speech before I've done with you; but don't you think that what some of you gentlemen are most eager after when you stand up to preach for freedom and all that, is the making yourselves popular names in order that people may flock round you, and pay you well for taking their cases in hand? Leastways, that's my experience of a good many barristers."

"There's no harm in wishing to become popular," remarked Emile energetically.

"No, sir; nor in wishing to sell one's goods," replied the draper with a laugh.

"Only I'll tell you what's the mistake many of the popular gentlemen make: they ask for a great deal more than we want, and a great deal more than's good for us to have; then they've another trick, which is to promise a good bit more than they can ever give."

"I believe you're trying to paint yourself much blacker than you really are," interposed Horace, smiling. "You can't care for freedom so little as you say, M. Pochemolle. That you should like selling your goods is natural enough, but you are a Frenchman, and must see something else in good government but a mere question of trade profits. Isn't there any satisfaction in being a free man in a free land? Is there no humiliation in living under a Government which treats us like children, not old enough to think for ourselves? Why, now, to go no further than your own case, do you find you have lost nothing by this new state of things? Formerly you had a parliament which debated and voted freely under public control; you could hold meetings whenever you wished to discuss political concerns; you had a free press; you elected your own mayors and your own officers in the National Guard; in a word, you were accounted somebody, and played your part in the State. But now what has become of all your rights?"

"Well, there you put the question in plain terms, and I'll answer you in the same way," replied M. Pochemolle, digging both hands into his pockets, and looking cheerily at the brothers. "A few years ago, as you

say, we had all those rights, and what did they profit us? Why, during eighteen mortal years, we had nothing but M. Guizot trying to turn out M. Thiers, and M. Thiers trying to turn out M. Guizot. What do you think I cared whether it was M. Guizot or the other who was in? There wasn't a pin's head to choose between them, so far as real opinions went; only for this, perhaps, that it was M. Thiers, who talked the fastest about good government, that gave us the least of it: for 'twas in his time that we almost had the war with England, and were taxed seventy millions to pay for Paris fortifications. Then there was the press. Ah! to be sure, that was free enough: there were a couple of hundred gentlemen who abused each other in the papers every evening, and ran each other through in the Bois de Boulogne of a morning. Very pleasant for those who were journalists, but as I wasn't one, that freedom didn't help me. Next, we had the right to elect our own officers in the National Guard, and do you know what was the result? why, there wasn't a sous' worth of discipline among the whole lot of us. At election-time it used to be a disgraceful sight to see the officers fawning to the privates, and if one of them was above doing it, or was at all sharp in commanding, why, twenty to one voted against him; so that he had to carry the musket again, after having worn the epaulet. I know what it is; for I don't want to make myself out better than I am: I once voted against my captain, simply because he'd blown me up before company about my rifle, which wasn't properly cleaned; only I'm hanged if I didn't feel a pang when I saw him, after the election, come and take up his stand in the ranks, whilst I had become a corporal. Then there used to be eternal fallings-out between the members of the Guard who were tradesmen and those who were professional, such as doctors, lawyers, retired officers from the army, and the like. These last were for having all the officers elected out of their set; and we tradesmen, who were in a majority, used to spite them, by electing nothing but our own party. I've seen a grocer, a tailor, and a baker, all officers in one company. I don't say a grocer can't be as brave as another man; only selling candles behind a counter doesn't prepare one for commanding troops, as we found out fast enough when the Revolution came. Shall I tell you now about our free parliament? There were four hundred of 'em in it, and the amount of talking they did was prodigious. They were at it six days a week during seven months out of the year, but I'm blessed if they ever did that for us" (M. Pochemolle snapped his fingers) "besides talking. We wanted new

lains for Paris; they wouldn't give 'em us — said it cost too much. We wanted new streets — same story. We had in the Cité yonder a whole lump of courts and alleys where people could punch one another's heads out of their windows from opposite sides of the street. They bred filth and fever they did, and so swarmed with rascals, that if the police wanted to lay hold of anybody there, they had to go twenty and thirty together. You'd have thought it would have been a mercy to burn the whole place; but when it came to be a matter of knocking it down and building something new and clean instead, everybody cried, 'Oh, no!' and 'Where's the money to come from?' And, I tell you, I was as bad as the rest of 'em, for though I wasn't a member of the House of Deputies, yet when me and a lot more of us, who had votes, used to get talking together about municipal business and other things we didn't understand, we were always saying 'No' to every thing. I remember I used to come straight slap out with the 'No' before I knew what the question was about; it was a habit I'd got into. But at present all that's changed. Our Emperor he says, 'I'm here to rule,' and he does what's good for us: builds new streets and the like without taking counsel of anybody. And quite right too; for you see, gentlemen, let each man keep to his own walk, say I: I'm a famous good hand at selling cloth, calico, and ribbons, but I understand next to nothing about governing a country, and I don't see what any of you 'ud have to gain by letting me try."

Emile gave a shrug: Horace laughed.

"Well, that's candid and modest enough, anyhow, M. Pochemolle," he said. "I can't say you've quite convinced me. In any case, I daresay we sha'n't be the less good friends from thinking differently."

"No, no, that we sha'n't, sir: we sha'n't indeed," answered M. Pochemolle. "Only" — and here M. P., relapsing into a serious vein, cast another deprecating look towards the picture of the Revolutionists which he had abandoned on the table during his last harangue, — "Only trust me, gentlemen, and don't have any thing to do with *them*. I've never known it lead to any thing but fighting in the streets and imprisonment afterwards. If they were all cut out of the same cloth as your respected father, it might be another matter; but they're not. I knew a Republican who talked very handsome about the rights of man, and went away without paying my bill."

M. Pochemolle was very exhaustive when he got on the subject of his antipathy for Revolutionists, and might have adduced numerous other instances of Republican shortcomings had not a knock at the door

interrupted him at this juncture, whilst a feminine voice from without cried: "Papa, you're wanted in the shop."

"Ah, that's my little girl, gentlemen," said M. Pochemolle; and opening the door he revealed a bright young lady, who looked some seventeen springs old, and was as pretty as clear hazel eyes, thick chestnut curls (young ladies wore curls in '54), red lips and neat dressing could make her. She reddened slightly at finding herself before two strange messieurs, but was not otherwise shy, for she repeated to her sire what she had already said, and added that it was "*maman*" who had sent her up to say that Monsieur Macrobe and his daughter were down stairs. She begged the messieurs' pardon for disturbing them.

"Come here, Georgette, and let me introduce you to these gentlemen," said M. Pochemolle, with a not unpardonable look of fatherly pride. "Gentlemen, you only saw my wife and my son when you came to take your rooms the other day. Here is my daughter, who was staying away with her aunt then. Georgette, these are the MM. Gerold, sons of Monsieur Gerold, who faced the fire of revolutionary rifles to save your father's life.* Make your best courtesy to them. Gentlemen, this is my little Georgette — my pet child." And the worthy man led the young lady forward by the hand.

There was the most graceful of bows on the part of Horace Gerold, a not less civil but graver salutation on the part of Emile, and a demure courtesy with more blushing from Mdlle. Georgette. As Frenchmen are never at a loss for compliments, M. Horace, who was always collected in the face of the adverse sex, added a few pretty words, which seemed to please M. Pochemolle. Mdlle. Georgette herself cast her eyes on the ground with an almost imperceptible smile, as if the young man's compliments were not the first she had heard in her life.

"And now to business," exclaimed the draper. "Monsieur Macrobe and his young lady sha'n't be kept waiting long, my dear. Ah, gentlemen, you should see Made-moiselle Macrobe — a pearl, as we should have said in my young days, though I wouldn't exchange her for my Georgette. But she'll marry a duke or a king before she's done; I'd stake twenty bales of cloth on it. Then there's her father, too. Lord bless my soul, what a long head! That's the kind of man to make a deputy of if

* N.B. — This was not quite historically correct, for the firing had ceased when M. G. picked up M. P., and it is not so sure that the latter would have died, even if he had not been picked up at all. But gratitude may be pardoned for exaggerating.

you like. When he started in life he'd not two brass farthings to rub together, and no profession either, nor trade, nor teaching, so far as I could see; and yet now — why, he rolls his carriage, and I guess he won't live much longer in this quarter; he'll be emigrating towards the Champs Elysées or the Chaussée d'Antin. Worse luck, for I shall lose a first-rate customer. A rising man, gentlemen, and thinks like me about politics; ay, it's not in his mouth you'd ever hear a word against the emperor."

Mdlle. Georgette pulled her father's sleeve.

"M. Macrobe was in a hurry, father."

"Yes, my dear, coming; it won't do to offend M. Macrobe. Gentlemen, your servant; and if ever I can serve you, pray do me the honor to command me. Georgette, my pet, make another courtesy to the Messieurs Gerold."

And Mademoiselle Georgette did.

"Queer card!" laughed Horace, when the good M. Pochemolle had retreated.

"I hope we shall see as little as possible of him for the future," answered the younger brother, dryly. "I don't like such cynicism."

"Oh! cynicism is a big word," observed Horace. "I don't see any thing cynic in the matter. We can't all think alike, you know."

Emile, for all his gentleness, was much less tolerant of hostile opinions than his brother. His was the nature out of which enthusiasts are moulded. He answered bitterly, "It's those sort of men who've helped to bring France to her present humiliation, and to send our father into exile. What wonder that there should be despots to treat us Frenchmen like slaves, when they are encouraged to it by such people as this — fellows who are ready to stand up for anybody in power, and to truckle to any government that will fill their tills."

"Whew — w — w!" whistled Horace. "Why look at things so gloomily, brother? Let's have freedom all round in the community. Think what it would be if everybody professed the same opinions — half the fun of life would be gone. Besides, it seems to me that a man who goes out three or four times over, and risks his life for his opinions, however absurd these may be, has a right to be respected. It isn't the same as sticking to one's convictions only so long as they pay you."

Emile shook his head, unconvinced; but the discussion was not prolonged further, for Horace remembered the letter which the draper had brought, and which was lying unopened on the table. He had not looked at the address, but, on taking it, saw that it was in Manuel Gerold's hand-

writing. "It's from our father," he said, breaking the seal; and Emile having asked him to read aloud, he read as follows:—

"BRUSSELS, November, 1854.

"MY DEAR BOYS, — I have just received your letters, informing me that you were almost installed; and by same post a copy of the 'Moniteur,' with your names amongst those of the new barristers admitted at the opening of the courts. It is a great satisfaction to me to feel that you are now fairly launched, both of you, in a profession where merit and hard work are more surely and liberally rewarded than in any other calling you could have chosen. The Bar will lead you to any thing, though your progress must be at first slow; but you can afford to wait, and you are too sensible not to be aware that the only stable reputations are those which are acquired laboriously, by dint of patience and energy. Had I staid longer in Paris, I should have introduced you to such few of my friends as still remain there. The number of them is terribly dwindled down, for most of us men of '48 have been scattered to the four winds; but there is Claude Febvre, one of the leaders of your profession, who has always been my firm ally — you will do well to call upon him. He will be sure to receive you kindly, and may be able to help you forward. In the press, Nestor Roche, the editor of 'La Sentinelle,' is my old and valued friend. You might find him a little rough at first, but there is a heart of gold under his shagginess. He lives at the office of his paper, Rue Montmartre. I should think it not improbable that my bankers, MM. Lecoq and Roderheim, would wish to show you some civility, and asks you to their parties; in which case you would perhaps do well to go, for my relations with the firm have always been friendly. I hear that they have just taken a new partner, a man named Macrobe. If it is the same Macrobe I knew in 1848, he will be likely to invite you, too. He was a curious fellow, whom I could never quite understand. I believe he was a very warm Republican, acted once or twice on my electoral committees, and during the Provisional Government asked me several times to assist him in getting army and navy contracts. I mention this because somehow he knew all about our family history, who I was, and the rest of it. I used to have some trouble in preventing him from trumping up my affairs in public, and paying me compliments. His object seemed to be to make friends with me; for though I never helped him in his contract hunting, he always professed to be a great supporter of mine" —

"Macrobe!" muttered Horace, breaking off. "Why, that's the name of M. Pochemolle's customer down stairs. I wonder whether the two are the same."

"M. Pochemolle said his M. Macrobe was a Bonapartist."

"H'm, to-day — yes; but he said nothing about six years ago."

"If they be the same," remarked Emile, quietly, "M. Macrobe may spare himself the trouble of showing any civilities to me."

Horace said nothing, but took up the reading where he had left off, and finished the letter: —

" Amongst my other quondam friends, I need not remind you of one whom you frequently saw come and visit me in old times: I mean M. Gribaud, who is now Minister of State. You remember the letter he wrote on the morrow of the *coup-d'état*, acquainting me with his sudden change of politics, and advising me to follow his example: you have not forgotten either the reply which I sent him. Under the circumstances, I scarcely think it probable that M. Gribaud will care to recollect he was once on such warm terms with us; and if he hears that you are in Paris, he will, doubtless, not trouble you with cards for any of those Ministerial soirées of his, which I hear are so much envied. Still, there is no knowing. My letter to him was not sharp: it was merely cold; and there is just a possibility that out of vanity or bravado, or from other motives difficult to analyze, he will invite you to go and witness his present splendor. Should this be the case, I confess it would please me to hear that you had held as completely aloof from this man as you would from any other individual who had shown himself openly dishonest. The world is indulgent towards men who have succeeded, and easily condones the villainies to which they may owe their triumphs; but for this reason it is the more important that strictly honorable men should build up a higher and sterner code of morality. You and I cannot harm M. Gribaud: neither would we if we could; but we can refuse him our homage, and so mark in our humble way that we draw no difference between the knavery that leads to the hulks and that which leads to the Cabinet.

"Let me hear from both of you as often as possible without intruding too much on your time, and believe me,

"My dear Boys,

"Your ever affectionate Father,
"MANUEL GEROLD."

Whilst Horace Gerold was reading this

letter to his brother, M. Pochemolle the draper, with his daughter Mdlle. Georgette, had returned to the shop on the ground floor, in order to attend on the important M. Macrobe. This gentleman — who at first sight looked like a weasel, upon closer inspection like a badger, and who, after mature examination, left one doubtful as to whether there were not a chimpanzee or two amongst his ancestors — was standing at one of the counters conversing volubly with the draper's wife, and holding up a piece of silk to the light to test the quality of the woof. The good M^{me}. Pochemolle, stout, buxom, and blazing in scarlet cap-strings, had been thrown into a sudden state of excitement and perspiration by the entry of this well-to-do but restless customer. M. Macrobe was one of those gentlemen who turn a shop upside down before they have been in it five minutes. At his bidding, M. Alcibiade Pochemolle, heir of M. Achille, had been made to haul down bales upon bales of silk, velvets, and satin, box after box of ribbons, until the counter was encumbered half a yard high with merchandise. The person for whose edification all this bustling and scurrying was supposed to take place was Mdlle. Angélique Macrobe, but it was her father who virtually did all the shopping. Mdlle. Angélique herself was a blue-eyed, blonde-haired, angel-faced child, who looked at people with a perpetual expression of soft wonder, and acquiesced in every thing her sire proposed in a quiet, pleased sort of way, as if she quite appreciated the blessing of having somebody to take the trouble of thinking off her hands. In terming her "child," I must be understood to speak figuratively, for her pretty baby-face was eighteen years old, and she was decked out in all the finery which proclaims a candidate in that most moral of competitions called the marriage-market.

M. Macrobe nodded when the draper came in, and continuing to look through the silk, "Morning, M. Pochemolle," he said. "Brought my daughter here to lay in winter stores. Goodish bit of silk this, but I don't believe in the dye. What's the news?"

In Macrobian phraseology, "What's the news?" had no reference whatever to the state of anybody's health or to occurrences in the political world. M. Macrobe was better informed that any man in Paris as to things politic, and the condition of people's health was a matter of great indifference to him. "What's the news?" was a query intended to elicit information as to what M. M. called "possible bargains." If there was any thing to be sold anywhere at a loss to the seller — anything from the

stock of a bankrupt tradesman to the "Stradivarius" of a starving fiddler or the pug-dog of a ruined actress, M. Macrobe was the man to seize the occasion by the forelock. It was by constantly inquiring "What's the news?" during a course of thirty years that M. Macrobe had, bit by bit, picked up his fortune.

"I don't think there's much doing in the quarter, sir," answered the draper, hastening behind his counter, with a respectful salutation, first to the daughter, and then to the father. "Nothing in the way of news, I mean. Trade's brisk, and money's plentiful enough, though to be sure I heard somebody say that our neighbor the Armorer, three doors off, was in a bad way. Didn't you tell me something about it, my dear?" (this to his wife).

"Yes, indeed," answered M^{me}. Pochemolle, looking up from the velvet she was spreading before M^{lle}. Angélique. "An honest man, too, and was getting on well in his business; but they say his son's not turned out what he should have done; his father's had to pay his debts, and this coming on the top of foolish gambling in stocks, has put him in a low way."

"What's the name and address?" asked M. Macrobe.

"Quirot, Armorer and Curiosity Shop, Number 9 in this street," said the draper; and down at once went the name of Quirot, 9 Rue Ste. Geneviève, in the notebook which M. Macrobe had whipped out from the breast-pocket of his coat.

"Generally, something to be picked up in a curiosity shop," he muttered. "Now then, my pet, have you seen any thing you like? Fairish velvet, M^{me}. Pochemolle; this year's make; can tell it by the touch. We shall want three ball-dresses—eh, pet?—what do you say to a white, a pink and white, and a light blue,—blue's what goes best with your hair."

M^{lle}. Angélique smiled and said, "Yes, papa."

"Measure out the silk, please, M. Pochemolle; and now twenty *mètres* of that velvet for a dinner-dress; ten of that white satin for a petticoat; enough white cashmere to make an opera cloak."

"Four *mètres*, M. Macrobe?"

"No, no: a goodish cloak like a shawl; something like the burnouses those Arab fellows wear: a thing to wrap one up all over—it's warmer and it's more *chic*. You must tell M^{me}. Pochemolle yourself, pet, how much trimming 'll be wanted."

M^{lle}. Angélique said, "Yes, papa," as before, and turned with a helpless look towards the draper's wife, to wonder how much trimming would be required for four dresses. Whilst M^{me}. Pochemolle was

doing her best to enlighten her on the weighty point, M. Macrobe had inquired for a second time of the draper whether he had any more news to give.

M. Pochemolle was up to his neck in silk, which was flooding the counter in waves a yard long as fast as he could measure it. He was full of merriment at the fine stroke of business he was doing that afternoon, so he answered with respectful joviality,—

"Should you consider it news, sir, to hear that I've got two fresh lodgers?"

"Depends who they are," replied the financier, quite seriously.

"Their name's Gerold, sir."

"Gerold!" echoed M. Macrobe, quickly; "any relations to Manuel Gerold?"

"They're his sons, sir; M. Horace and M. Emile Gerold."

Out came M. Macrobe's pocket-book in a trice.

"What floor, M. Pochemolle? what's the age of the two young gentlemen? and what are they doing in Paris? Manuel Gerold's a most intimate friend of mine, banks with us: a curious character, but—ahem!—very well off—very."

A little astonished, M. Pochemolle informed his customer that his lodgers were on the third floor, that they had not been with him long, that they were quiet young gentlemen, and that their profession was the law. "Wasn't aware that you knew them, M. Macrobe," he added; "I was just talking with them, when Georgette came up to fetch me; but they didn't say any thing at the mention of your name."

"Nor do I know them," answered M. Macrobe, promptly jotting down, *Horace and Emile Gerold, 3d floor over Pochemolle's, Rue Sainte Geneviève*. "Manuel Gerold's the man I know; but his sons and I will soon scrape acquaintance. Angélique my child, remember the Messieurs Gerold, and tell your Aunt, when you get home, to have them down on her list for our next party. But stay: they live in this house: why shouldn't I go up and drop a card whilst you're making out your bill, M. Pochemolle?" and M. Macrobe fumbled in his pockets for a pair of black kid-gloves, which did duty with him on ceremonious occasions.

"I am sure they will be delighted to see you, sir," observed the draper. And the worthy man spoke as he thought; for, indeed, it seemed to him impossible that anybody should be otherwise than delighted at the sight of an individual so eminently prosperous as M. Macrobe. The latter drew on his gloves, gave his hat a brush with the sleeve of his coat, and walked out; but he was spared the trouble of climbing up three flights of stairs, for he had scarce

y left the shop when the two sons of his most intimate friend emerged from the *porte-cochère* of the house in person. They had finished their decorating up stairs, and were on their way to make a few calls before dinner. M. Pochemolle noticed them through the window, went out and stopped them as they were passing his shop, and then ran after M. Macrobe crying, "Those were the MM. Gerold, sir, whom you met going in."

In another half minute M. Macrobe, with a most friendly smirk on his acute physiognomy, was holding out his hand to the younger of the two brothers. He had mistaken him for the elder, on account of his graver face and stronger build. "Monsieur le Marquis de Hautbourg, I'm truly glad that hazard should have thrown me in your way," he began; "hope I see you well? Only just heard you were in Paris."

"My name's not Marquis of Hautbourg," answered Emile very distantly. "Here is my elder brother."

"And I call myself Horace Gerold," continued the other, not less distantly, but with rather more curiosity in his tone.

"Ah! yes; I perfectly understand; aversion to titles; most respectable prejudice; am a Republican myself to the backbone. Your father and I are great friends, M. Horace: my name is Macrobe."

"Oh! you are M. Macrobe," said Horace, amused.

"At your service, M. Horace: Macrobe, of 'Lecoq, Röderheim and Macrobe,' your bankers. Dear me, what a likeness between father and sons! Do me the pleasure to step in a moment, M. Horace and M. Emile, and let me introduce my daughter to you."

From the moment when he heard the name Macrobe, Emile set his face rigidly and answered only in monosyllables. Horace suffered himself to be led into the shop by the arm and presented in due form to Mademoiselle Angélique. The draper's daughter, who remembered the pretty compliment with which the well-looking young gentleman had honored her some twenty minutes before, raised her eyes slyly from the parcel she was tying, to see whether he was going to publish a second edition of this flattery for Mademoiselle Macrobe. But nothing save the usual courtesies took place. Perhaps Horace Gerold was too much struck by Mademoiselle Angélique's beauty to say any thing; for in truth to those who saw her for the first time, the sweet candid-faced girl appeared the incarnation of all that was lovely and lovable in woman. Her courtesy to the two brothers was a model in its way, Mademoiselle An-

gélisque being an adept pupil of M. Cellarius, her dancing-master.

M. Macrobe, not unmindful of the effect created by his daughter's beauty, followed up his advantages by at once inviting Horace and Emile — but especially Horace — to come and dine on an early day. "Quiet people we are," he said, with a bluntness not quite suited to the weas'ly mobility of his eyes and the fox-like acuity of his nose. "I live here in this quarter not far off from you — Rue de Seine, opposite the Luxembourg. Name a day, and we'll have as snug a dinner as you could get in Paris. Twelve at table, you know, just enough to be cosey, and I'll ask a solicitor or two: it's good for young barristers to be friends with solicitors."

Though the invitation was cordial, Horace politely regretted that the number of his pressing engagements would prevent him from naming a day; and there he was going to stop, but — after a second's hesitation, and a glance in the direction of Mademoiselle Angélique — he promised he would do himself the pleasure of calling. Emile, more wary, promised nothing; but the assurance of the elder was enough for M. Macrobe, who appeared satisfied.

For the last five minutes the fingers of the entire Pochemolle family had been nimbly at work, folding, rolling, parcelling, and stringing. M. Alcibiade Pochemolle, the cashier of the firm, now went to his high desk and totted up the items of the various purchases into one grand-total, smearing the whole with sand by way of conclusion, under pretence of blotting it. "Shall we book to your account, M. Macrobe?" he asked.

"No, I closed my account last autumn," said the financier; "for the future I pay ready money. Knock off the discount."

This was at once done, for the house of Pochemolle and Son transacted business on the fine old principle of deducting 6 per cent for cash. The bill was a heavy one; but I dare say M. Macrobe was not altogether grieved. He read aloud the total — 2,785 francs 75 centimes — with some ostentation, drew out three bank-notes of 1,000 francs each, and paid without a word. This feat, however, reminded him once more that Manuel Gerold banked with his firm: so, taking Horace by the button of his coat, he drew him a step aside, and said, "It's we, you know, who are to pay you your allowance, 3,000 francs a year; but I've been a young man myself, and know what it is. If ever you're hard up, don't forget where I live: my cash-box is not like the bank, it's open at all hours — to my friends."

"Thank you; I never contract debts

which I have no prospect of paying," replied Horace curtly.

A few years before, whilst he was still a law student, M. Macrobe's offer might have stirred him to emotion; at present, he felt inclined to resent it as an impertinence, the more so as he recalled the passage of his father's letter, in which the acquaintance of the financier with the Gerold family concerns was hinted at.

But M. Macrobe, who knew nothing about any passage in a letter, grinned at the young man's stiff answer, and, with a leer that was intended to be arch, said, "Oh! of course, of course, M. Horace, that's the proper reply to make — never accept a loan till you want it. Only, mind what I say, and if ever you do want, come to me. All in friendship, you know; no securities or any thing of that kind — plain word of honor, and down goes the money."

And with this he turned on his heel, leaving no time for a second refusal.

Mademoiselle Angélique had risen at this juncture, and was preparing to leave the shop as soon as her father should be ready. Seeing the financier's brougham standing outside, Horace could scarcely do less than offer the young lady his arm to help her into the carriage. Even had he wished to evade performing this civility, he would have been unable to do so, for M. Macrobe, in going to the counter to get his bill receipted, cried, "I am sure, my dear, M. Horace will kindly give you his arm whilst Madame Pochemolle counts me my change."

And so the two young people walked out together, preceded by the Pochemolles male, both of them freighted with cardboard boxes and packets.

Mlle. Angélique scarcely touched Horace's sleeve with her dainty gloved hand; and, in answer to a remark of his respecting the coldness of the weather, replied, "Yes, Monsieur, it is," with the same depth of earnestness with which she would have subscribed to an article of the Christian faith. Once she was safely stowed into the brougham, and had mildly thanked Horace, M. Macrobe came bustling out amidst the bows and murmured benedictions of the Pochemolles, and took farewell of the brothers. He did not attempt to shake hands with Emile, for he was a perspicacious man was M. Macrobe, and easily discerned where he was not welcome: but he shook hands warmly with Horace, and repeated, "Mind, M. Horace, Rue de Seine; always delighted to see you — Angélique too."

And with this, not forgetful of business, he directed his coachman to stop at the curiosity shop of the ill-starred M. Quirot,

out of whom he hoped to be able to screw a bargain.

When the carriage had rolled off, the first remark of Horace to his brother was: "That's the most beautiful girl I've ever seen in my life; if she's as intelligent as she's lovely, she must be a paragon."

Precisely at the same moment M. Macrobe was discoursing to his offspring in this strain: "My pet, that M. Horace with the light moustaches is a marquis, and, at the death of his father, who is a little cracked — in fact, entirely cracked — he will be a duke, and have one of the finest fortunes in France. I'd no idea we should meet him in Paris in this way; but, since I've had the luck, why, I'll get him to come and see us; and — h'm — you'll try and be civil to him, won't you, pet?"

To which speech Mademoiselle Angélique replied with a smile of placid obedience, such as a seraph might have envied: "Yes, papa."

CHAPTER VI.

A FIRST BRIEF.

HORACE GEROLD did not immediately redeem his promise of going to call on the financier. After thinking during a day or two of the sweet face and tiny hand of Mademoiselle Angélique, that young lady and her sire went out of his head, and it was fully three months before he renewed acquaintance with them. In the mean while, M. Macrobe spared neither letters nor invitation cards, and when these were declined, he came himself to pay personal visits; but he never found the brothers at home. The fact is, they were hard workers. Ambitious to push their way quickly, they slaved at their trade as men must slave who wish to succeed. This is the life they led: Up at seven, they fagged at law-books — but principally the Code — till eleven; at eleven they went out and breakfasted at their *table d'hôte*, which took them till about a quarter to twelve; breakfast over, they walked down together to the Palace of Justice, put on their caps and gowns, and went from court to court, listening to cases, until six; in the evenings, after dinner, they generally spent a couple of hours in the Café Procope, reading the papers and talking politics with fellow-barristers; and the remainder of their time was devoted to the same employment as the early morning: that is, either in studying law or in getting up history — one of the most indis-

ensable branches of knowledge in a country where barristers have so often to defend political offenders. The time spent in the courts was that which seemed most arduous to them both, and here a marked difference in their characters became discernible. Unlike his brother, Emile seldom went into the criminal courts. He usually selected the most complicated case on the Civil Roll, and sat the trial out with stolid patience from first to last, often foregoing his breakfast to be earlier in his place, and taking notes with an unflagging attention, which earned him the admiration of some of the judges, by whom he soon came to be noticed as "that young man who never goes to sleep."

Frequently it happened that Emile was the only barrister—and, indeed, the only spectator—present, besides the counsel, and these last would marvel to see him follow all the mazes of some terrifically intricate argument concerning a disputed boundary wall, an unintelligible passage in a codicil, or a right of way over a footpath. They would have been much more astonished, had they known that Emile Gerold generally studied these arguments a second time, when he got home, in the "Gazette des Tribunaux," making it a principle, once he had taken up a case, to master it thoroughly. Horace could not have stood this up-hill kind of labor. The cases he selected in preference were those which promised most excitement. The court of assize, the sixth and seventh chambers of correctional police, during press trials, and the third civil court, pending a suit *en séparation de corps et de biens*,—these were his places of favorite resort, though his object was not to recreate himself by listening to scandal-mongering witnesses; for he commonly went out of court whilst evidence was being taken, and only came in during the speeches of counsel, *pro* and *con*, and during the summing-up. Whilst his brother was laying down a solid stratum of law-experience, and learning to be a close, persevering reasoner, Horace was acquiring the gift of a ready tongue,—not very strong in argument, but clever at that headforemost kind of rhetoric which capsizes a jury, and drags the public along with it. He was the disciple and admirer of the half-dozen leading barristers who held public prosecutors in check, kept a whole court fizzing with excitement whilst they spoke, and were known to the outside world through the medium of their daguerrotype portraits, purchasable on the Boulevards for twenty francs.

One day, Horace had been listening to a remarkable orator of this school, who, with much credit to himself and great advantage

to society, had been rescuing an assassin from the scaffold; and he was walking along the gallery, which leads from the Assize Court to the Salle des Pas Perdus (French Westminster Hall), musing what a fine thing it was to set twelve jurymen whimpering in concert, when, on reaching the hall, he was almost run into by a man with a preposterous-looking hat, who was wandering about in a purposeless sort of way, evidently seeking somebody, but not paying much attention to whither his steps led him. This man's hat at once stamped him as being out of the ruck of common humanity. It was a hat such as could only figure on the head of one who despised conventionalities, and was wont to pursue his own course in life, undeterred by sarcasm. It was a tall hat, made of silk, and towering into a peak, with an altogether obsolete brim, twice as wide as those ordinarily in vogue, and standing straight out from the crown of the hat, without the least curve, like the balcony of a window. Underneath this head-dress gleamed the face of a man of sixty, round and smooth-shaven, all but the moustache, which hung gray and wild to below the chin. The eyes were bright and intelligent, though cold and searching. The nose, mouth, chin, and lips, were all large and boldly-delineated, denoting a man who held pretty grimly by his opinions once he had formed them, and was no more to be bantered out of a crotchet than to be intimidated out of a resolution. There are faces like this on which one may read character as in an open book. The man was dressed, regardless of fashion, in wide loose clothes. He sported a broad collar, turned down over his coat, and leaving a good deal of his throat bare. His hands were in his trousers-pockets.

He made no apology to Horace for nearly running into him; but, seeing the latter was a barrister, he said, "Can you tell me where I'm likely to find Maitre* Claude Febvre?"

Claude Febvre was the barrister upon whom Manuel Gerold had recommended his sons to call. The brothers had done so, and were on very good terms with the great pleader, who had promised to take them in hand and help them forward as soon as he could. At that moment, Claude Febvre happened to be in the provinces, standing counsel in a suit at Bordeaux, so that Horace was able to inform the stranger that it was no use looking for him at the palace.

"At Bordeaux is he?" responded the man with the hat. "Well, it doesn't much matter. I should have retained him

* Maitre (Master) is the substitute for Monsieur in the case of French barristers. The title is only used at the law courts.

because he's a friend of mine; but my affair is as plain as a mill-board: anybody can plead it." He fixed his eyes on Horace Gerold, surveyed him half a minute, as if taking measure of his quality, and then said, "Have you many briefs on hand, young man?"

Horace Gerold had not a single brief on hand. He was just then awaiting the return of this very Claude Febvre to make his *début* at the bar in the character of second junior in an action for damages against a railway company. He colored; but, the sense of his professional dignity rising uppermost within him, he answered quietly, "If you want assistance, Monsieur, I dare say, I shall be able to give it you."

"What's your name?" asked the stranger.

"My name's Horace Gerold."

"Ah! I thought I'd seen those eyes somewhere. Come you along with me, young man. We two are friends. Have you ever heard of Nestor Roche?"

"Yes, indeed," exclaimed Horace stopping. "My brother and I called upon him twice by our father's special desire; but he was not at home either time,—that is," added Horace smiling, "he was at home both times; but once, when we called at twelve, we were told he was in bed; and the other time, when we went at three, he was breakfasting; so we merely left cards."

"Yes: so would you be in bed at twelve if you were editing a paper till six in the morning," rejoined the man with the hat queerly. "But give me your hand. I was glad to see your honest cards on the table. Next time you write to your father, tell him, from me, that there's not a man I esteem more under heaven. Come along now, and I'll tell you about this case. You shall plead it for me."

It was a very hearty grip, something like a bear's, which he gave the young man. He then slipped his arm through his, and the two went together to a room in a corner of the Hall, where they could talk over matters in quiet. Horace, though a little chagrined that a man so worthy as Nestor Roche was known to be should wear so eccentric a hat, was pleased to have met his father's friend, and the prospect of now handling a first brief added very naturally to his elation.

"Look here," began Nestor Roche, drawing a copy of his paper, "*La Sentinelle*," from his pocket. "My gazette's got into hot water. It would never get into hot water if I alone wrote in it; for though there's not a line I pen but what's against the Government, I'm an old hand, you see, and know how to steer clear. However, some of the others are not so wary, and the other day one of my young ones, Max Delormay,

who does the 'Echoes,' wrote this note, which I didn't read carefully enough before it went into print; so that now we've got an action for libel on us in the Correctional Court. It's all my fault, for Delormay wouldn't be supposed to know; in fact nobody does know what's libel, and what's not, until he's written twenty years. Of course we shall be convicted, so I don't ask you to try for an acquittal. The '*Sentinelle*,' an opposition journal edited by a Republican, and tried before three Imperialist judges without jury, for attacking an Imperialist stock-jobber, has no more chance of being let off than if I'd been caught in the act of firing at the Emperor's carriage. Delormay and I shall each get three months' imprisonment; that's what we shall get: there'll be a fine into the bargain; and as the plaintiff has laid his damages at a hundred thousand francs, I expect the judges will award at least ten thousand. All that, however, is of no consequence; those are the risks of journalism, like the breakages in a china-shop; and I shall be able to edit my paper just as well in the prison of Sainte Pélagie as in the Rue Montmartre. But I'll tell you what I wish you to do. You must show in your speech that we've no personal rancor against this fellow whom Delormay has attacked; that we have merely hit at him as one of a disreputable class who are growing rank as weeds under this precious Second Empire of ours. Make of this affair one of commercial morality. Argue that it is the duty of the Press to expose people like this fellow, who rob the public just as truly as if they stood on a highway road and rifled the pockets of the passers-by. These are the facts:—A very loose fish named—but look, here is the note; you can read it for yourself."

Nestor Roche pointed with his finger to a passage of "*La Sentinelle*" in which figured the following lines:—

"We have noticed two very interesting items of news in yesterday's '*Moniteur*': the first announcing that a certain Monsieur Isidore Macrobe has been appointed Knight of the Imperial Order of the *Legion of Honor*, and the second proclaiming through the advertisement-columns that the same M. Isidore Macrobe has been elected one of the directors of the new *Société du Crédit Parisien*. We have no wish to say anything unpleasant either to the Members of the *Legion of Honor* or to the shareholders of the *Crédit*; but before congratulating the former on their new colleague, and the latter on their fresh director, we confess we should be glad to know whether this M. Isidore Macrobe is the same Isidore Macrobe who was declared a bankrupt in Paris

in 1835, in London three years later, and in Brussels in 1842; whether he is the same M. Macrobe who, having returned to Paris in 1843, singularly well off after his third bankruptcy, at once revealed himself to the world as Treasurer of a *Compagnie Générale des Pavage Départemental*, which Company never paved any thing, but collapsed in 1845 — that is, some months after M. Macrobe had with striking foresight resigned his post of Treasurer, and, as we understand, sold his shares at a most advantageous premium; whether it was this M. Macrobe again who, in 1846, bloomed out afresh as Treasurer of the *Société de l'Eclairage Rustique*, which did rather less in the way of lighting than the other had done in the way of paving, and from which M. Macrobe retired, as before, in time to avoid the catastrophe which soon after befell the shareholders; and finally, whether it is this M. Macrobe who, in 1848, being a zealous republican, obtained of the Provisional Government a contract for supplying all the country mairies with plaster statues of the Republic, which statues have never been beheld to this day, although there is no mention of M. Macrobe having ever refunded the twenty thousand francs which he received on account. It is a correspondent who has suggested that we should ask these questions, and we do so in the hope that they will elicit an answer. If all the Isidore Macrobes just alluded to form but one individual, it will remain with us to speculate what can be the claims of this gentleman to be rewarded with an order of merit, and to act as director to a company which we had hitherto believed to be a *bonâ-fide* enterprise."

Horace had not been able to suppress a slight exclamation at reading the name of Macrobe, and when he had finished he said to Nestor Roche: "I know this man a little; he's a partner in the firm of Lecoq and Roderheim, with which my father banks."

"Oh, you know him! will that prevent your giving him a dressing?" inquired the editor.

"Not the least," rejoined Horace. "If all this is true, the man deserves to be shown up, and I think M. Delormay was quite right in exposing him."

"Well, I don't quite know about that," grumbled Nestor Roche, removing his monumental covering, and rubbing the gray, bristly head under it with a perplexed air. "You must stick to that line of arguing in your defence; but, between us both, if newspapers set themselves to unmasking all the Macrobes in Paris, they'd have to issue a special edition every morning. I shouldn't have let in the paragraph at all if I'd been awake when I read it; but Delormay gen-

erally takes things so quietly that I didn't expect to see him fire out in this way, and so glanced at his note with only half an eye. The whole thing's true, though; for I remember all about those plaster statues of Liberty which were to replace the busts of Louis Philippe; but the fact of its being true doesn't matter, for French law, as you've learned, won't allow a defendant in libel to furnish proof. No, the job's a bad one for us; and it'll be useless to ask for any mitigation of penalty; but, if you think you can manage it, I shouldn't be sorry to see M. Macrobe get a first-class lashing. Since he's rammed us into a corner, he may as well have the benefit of all the mauling we can give him."

Horace assented, told the Editor briefly all he knew concerning M. Macrobe — which was very little — and inquired for what day the trial was fixed. It was down for hearing on the following Friday, that is, four days off, it being then a Monday; but as postponements of a week or fortnight can generally be obtained without difficulty as many as three or four times over, there was no actual reason why the case should come on for another six weeks.

"I wouldn't ask for too many postponements, though, if I were you," remarked Nestor Roche. "The judges are always as sulky as possible with our trade; and, besides, it doesn't look well asking for adjournments in a libel case; it gives the plaintiff the opportunity of bellowing that we're afraid of him. Be ready to face the fellow as soon as you can — without adjourning at all if possible."

Horace, not sorry that his first client should be as impatient of delay as he, readily promised that he would have the case at his fingers' ends by Friday morning. He was not likely to spare the midnight oil over a maiden brief, and would have worked without any sleep at all for the next three days if needful. Nestor Roche gave him the address of his solicitor, with a laconic recommendation, however, not to follow the instructions of that luminary, solicitors being temporizers by nature, addicted to adjournments, and devoid of taste for stand-up fighting. He added, that he himself was always to be seen from three in the afternoon to three in the morning inclusively; and matters being thus pleasantly settled, he observed he must be off, gave another grip to Horace, buried his hands in his pockets and was gone, with as much unconcern as if he had been ordering a new pair of shoes, instead of preparing to face three months' imprisonment.

That day was marked with a white stone by the two brothers, and assuredly they are the happiest days in our lives, those on

which we first see our way to earning our own living. A first article or a first picture accepted, a maiden brief, a maiden fee — these are joys which may well console those whose lot it is to struggle, for not having been born with golden spoons in their mouths. Emile was as elated at his brother's piece of luck as Horace could be; he made no doubt that now his brother had got a foot in the stirrup he would quickly ride away to fame. But this was not all. Emile did not confine himself to mere congratulations; he was anxious, so far as in him lay, to help in assuring Horace's success. During the whole evening he pored over libel cases in records of French jurisprudence, and the following morning slipped out early, without saying where he was going, and remained absent till dinner-time. When he returned he handed his brother a paper, covered with precise notes as to M. Isidore Macrobe's career. He had spent his day in the public library of the Rue Richelieu, consulting the files of the French and Belgium "Moniteurs" and of "The London Gazette" and had acquired proof indisputable as to the worthy financier's three bankruptcies. Further, he had been to call upon two members of the Provisional Government of 1848, and both had assured him that the details as to the statue contract were perfectly correct, though one of them added that the unlucky "Sentinelle" had placed itself altogether in the wrong box, for that suspicious bankruptcies, suspicious stock-jobbing, and suspicious practice with regard to Government contracts, were only accounted stigmas when a man was ruined by them. This, too, was Manuel Gerold's rather sorrowful view. Horace had written to give him an account of the case, and on the very morning of the trial he received an answer, in which the old tribune said: "I am not sorry, my dear boy, that you should win your spurs in defending my old friend Nestor Roche, neither am I in any way concerned that you should be obliged to attack that curious M. Macrobe, well-wisher of mine though he profess to be. At the same time, let me warn you that, from the world's point of view, your clients have not a leg to stand on. Society — especially Second Empire society — will always be averse to having ugly truths raked up against a man who has made his way. Nothing that you can say against M. Macrobe will affect his reputation in the least. He will leave the court with a high head, and pocket poor Nestor Roche's damages with as much coolness as if the money were owing to him."

There was another person whose opinions in the matter of the libel leaned much rather towards law than equity, and that was the excellent M. Pochemolle. Coming home

on the eve of the trial, after receiving one or two final instructions from the Editor, Horace was stopped by the honest draper, who dragged him by the sleeve into his shop, and said, in tones of dismay: "Dear me, M. Horace, what's this I hear — that you're going to speak against M. Macrobe? It can't be true, come now" —

And Madame Pochemolle, behind her counter, chimed in with the exclamation: "Such a civil young gentleman as you are, M. Horace; I'm sure you wouldn't say harm against anybody."

It took the good couple some time to understand that a man could actually reconcile it with his conscience to assail so extremely respectable a person as M. Macrobe. It was Mademoiselle Georgette who had first discovered in the paper the paragraph which said: "The trial of 'La Sentinelle,' in the person of its editor, printer, and of M. Max Delormay, a member of the staff, for libelling M. Macrobe, of the banking firm of Lecoq, Roderheim and Macrobe, will take place on Friday. Maître Giboulet is retained for the plaintiff, Maître Horace Gerold will appear for the defence." For a while M. Pochemolle had clung to the saving hope that this might be a mistake, or that there were two Horace Gerolds, or that the names had been interverted; the correct reading being — Giboulet for the defence and Gerold for the plaintiff; but when Horace avowed without a blush that the announcement was perfectly correct, M. Pochemolle called to mind the words of solemn warning he had uttered to the young men at the sight of David's picture, and reflected that the present incident was a realization of his worst forebodings. Nothing but association with Republicans could ever have seduced a well-nurtured and generally quiet youth into taking part with a subversive print against a gentleman who paid ready-money, and had, as it was affirmed, at least two hundred thousand francs a year. He hoped that no harm would come of it, but it was his experience that bad beginnings generally led to evil ends.

So spake M. Pochemolle, his wife assenting with a sigh; and had it not been for Mademoiselle Georgette, Horace would have been condemned *nem. con.* by the worthy household. But Georgette Pochemolle, who was accustomed to speak her mind, and who, besides, felt an interest in the two rising barristers (as what young woman will not feel an interest in a couple of young men who pass by the window several times a day, and on each occasion favor her with a bow?) — Georgette Pochemolle quietly confronted her scandalized father, in defence of the incriminated

youth: "For," said she, "what if this M. Macrobe deserves to be spoken against, why shouldn't M. Horace do it as much as anybody else?" A mild query, which caused M. Pochemolle to stand bolt still, and answer, with all the dignity he could command, "Mademoiselle, I am surprised that you should join in the cry against one of your father's most valued customers. When you grow to be older, you will learn that those who become rich are always pursued by the animosity of the envious. Let it be enough for you that M. Macrobe enjoys my personal esteem and that of his sovereign, who has just rewarded him with the Cross of Honor."

Georgette went on with her stitching, but scolding never yet convinced a woman.

It must be confessed, however, that neither his father's predictions nor the draper's lamentations much damped Horace Gerold. Of all the godsend which could befall a French barrister in the year 1854, that most to be prayed for was a brief in a political trial. At a time when public meetings were prohibited, when people held their tongues under double chain and padlock, when even the parliamentary debates were a secret, it was something for a man to have the opportunity of standing up in a full court and giving vent to whatever pent-up liberalism there might be in him. Not a few barristers would have cheerfully hartered one of their ears for such a chance; for, if taken good advantage of, it meant simply reputation, honor, and possibly fortune. No great talent, in fact no talent at all, was needed; all that was required was boldness. Talent is of use when a cause has to be won, but in 1854 the results of all press trials were known beforehand. Barristers accepted the defence of prosecuted journalists, not with any hope of obtaining an acquittal—that they were aware would have been an idle dream—but with the view to making sensation speeches, which should bring them into notice. Horace was in no way ignorant of this particular, and the more he thought over the matter the more clearly did he perceive that Nestor Roche had thrown an occasion in his way such as did not often fall to a pleader of but a few months' standing. It is true that the trial in which he was engaged was not strictly a political one, being virtually nothing more than an action for imprisonment and damages brought by a private person. But political is an elastic word; in France, where one of the parties to a suit is an Imperialist and the other a Radical, the judge would be a phoenix who kept politics out of the question.

Need it be said that Horace was up with

the dawn on the morning of the famous Friday; and shall we blame him if he paid much more than ordinary attention to his toilet? Always neat—a dandy even for the Bar—he put himself this time into black, eschewing the gray trousers habitual to the younger members of his profession; and selected the stiffest of his shirt-collars, no doubt so as to be on a level with the luminaries of the judgment seat. He had not slept very soundly the night before, neither had Emile. The latter, quietly busy to the last, had remained working till long after midnight, and had compiled about twenty foolscap pages of notes, full of intelligent arguments and precedents drawn from past libel cases. "You would have managed this case better than I," said Horace affectionately, as he glanced through this labor of love. Emile had neglected nothing; the notes were plainly written in the darkest ink, and blank spaces were left between each, so that they might more easily catch the eye if consulted in a hurry; with patient thoughtfulness an appendix had been added to help in ready reference to the rest of the work.

Just as the two brothers were going to set out, soon after nine, Georgette Pochemolle came running up with a letter. By the way, it was not Mademoiselle Georgette's business to bring up letters, but the postman, when pressed for time, frequently made mistakes and left lodgers' letters in the shop along with the Pochemolle correspondence, instead of delivering them to the *conciierge* at the private door. On such occasions Mademoiselle Georgette, with her father's sanction, would often run up stairs with the missive, and be rewarded with, "How good of you to take so much trouble!" or "We're really ashamed to put you to so much inconvenience," which would make her sometimes say to herself that these Messieurs Gerold, especially the eldest—for it was commonly he who spoke—were certainly very well-bred young men.

The letter Mademoiselle Georgette brought was rather a curious one: it came from the imperturbable M. Macrobe:—

"MY DEAR M. HORACE: I just hear that you are retained for the defence in my affair with the 'Sentinelle.' Bad business for Roche—I am talking of the libel. He'll be knocked down in heavy damages, and I reckon the costs will be biggish; but I'm glad we've got an honorable adversary like you against us. Of course the whole story of the 'Sentinelle' is a lie: but I don't ask you to believe it from me. I only write to prove there's no rancor. We who've made money are accustomed to hitting from

those who haven't—I don't say that for you, but for Roche.

"I shake your hand cordially,

"ISADORE MACROBE.

"By-the-by, you've not yet kept your promise about calling. You know we've removed since I last saw you. Our present address is 294 Avenue des Champs Elysées. Easily find the house: two statues of naked boys with goats'-legs playing on the flute outside."

Horace crumpled up this calm epistle, laughing, and threw it into the fire.

"He's cool enough, at all events," said Emile with a smile. And the two brothers set off together for the palace.

CHAPTER VII.

A FIRST SPEECH.

A ROOM forty feet long by twenty, wainscoted with light oak, and papered above the wainscot in green, studded with gold bees. Twelve rows of seats on either side of a passage running down the whole length of the room, and leading to a dais raised two feet from the floor. On the dais, a table covered with green baize, and three arm-chairs. To the left of the dais a low pulpit, to the right a dock. On the wall, in guise of ornament, a clock, and a bust, in marble, of the sovereign—the bust faces the dock, the clock shows its face to the pulpit. Over the dais a life-sized picture of the Saviour on the cross, the arms stretched out in ghastly whiteness, and the forehead bloody from the crown of thorns. Add to this a fire-stove near the door, three glistening pewter inkstands with three black blotting-books on the dais table, a fourth inkstand and blotting-book in the pulpit, and you will have the Sixth Chamber of Correctional Police.

From ten o'clock till four, five days out of the week, thieves and swindlers are put to confusion there. On Fridays the thieves and swindlers only remain in possession till noon; at noon come the journalists, and the procession of them generally lasts till six. Sometimes the journalists are too numerous to be disposed of in an afternoon, and then the Wednesday is considerably set apart for them. Justice shows her respect for the Press by making the thieves and swindlers wait.

From 1852 to 1860 Press trials took place with closed doors: that is, none but the defendants, plaintiffs, witnesses, and

members of the Bar were allowed to be present. Things were conducted *snuggly en famille*; and when the trial was over the papers were allowed to publish the indictment and the judgment, but not the speeches for the defence, or the depositions of the witnesses. This last precaution, intended to safeguard the public against the spirit of partiality that might accrue from hearing both sides of the question, is in force to this day; but the regulation which kept the public out of court has been kindly abrogated. There is nothing now to prevent people from going to admire how justice is meted out to the pen tribe.

Thus, in 1854, the trial of Macrobe v. Roche ought to have been pleaded with three judges, Monsieur the Public Prosecutor, and a few desultory barristers, for sole spectators. So said the law, and so said the besworded Municipal Guards, who kept watch at the door, inflexibly keeping back the curious, and disdaining blandishments, supplications, and bribes alike. But in France laws have from all time been much easier to make than to enforce, and there was one method by which one could elude both the vigilance of the "municipals" without the court and that of the ushers within. The way was simply this: to shave off one's beard and mustache, if one possessed such appendages, and to hire a barrister's cap, gown, and bands, of the robe-man at the Palace. It was impossible that the "municipals" could know the features of all the members of the Bar; the shaven or plain-whiskered face, with the cap and gown, were their only clews; they had no power to keep out barristers, and so in you walked. Press trials were such an attraction that a good many journalists kept themselves permanently shaved, so as to have the privilege of going to hear their compeers condemned of a Friday. The judges more than suspected the infringement, but were obliged to wink at it. One of them—a cantankerous judge—had tried to put a stop to the evil; but the "municipals" at the door are not a pre-eminently intelligent body, and when told to be extra careful, they kept out real barristers as well as spurious. This had led to complications. The Conseil de l'Ordre des Avocats had remonstrated, and demanded an apology. Judges don't like to apologize; and so the upshot of it was, that the shaven journalists remained masters of the situation.

On Friday afternoons the Sixth Chamber was always crowded. When Horace Gerold arrived the repunctually at twelve with his brother, he found it so crammed that there would not have been standing-room for a magpie.

was going to be tried; to him the Sixth Chamber was a gambling-house, in which he was going to take his first throw with the dice. From ten till twelve he had been pacing up and down the *Salle des Pas Perdus*, rehearsing the main points of his speech with Emile, and stifling occasional qualms of nervousness by calling all his vanity and young ambition to his aid. A congratulatory shake of the hand or two from several of his friends, an encouraging nod and smile from one of the "great guns," who had said to him, "This is your maiden-speech day, isn't it, Gerold? I wish you success," and the flattering hums of "That's young Gerold." "That's the fellow who's going to defend the 'Sentinelle,'" which he had heard in the crowd outside the court, had been so many circumstances that had helped to buoy him up like corks in his small sea of glory. He did not regain complete and cool possession of his head until he found himself seated, with his brother to the right of him, Nestor Roche's solicitor to the left, and the three judges of the Correctional Court enthroned opposite him on their dais.

A deep silence, and business at once commenced. Not a moment was lost in vain formalities. The chief judge of the three—a florid magistrate, with a deal of starch, silk cassock, and red ribbon about him—lifted up a white hand, armed with a gold pencil-case, and said, in a voice agreeable as the abrupt closing of a steel-trap, "The first case is that of the '*Journal de la Reforme*,' for exciting to hatred and contempt of the Government. Are the parties here?"

Up jumped a slim barrister from close to where Horace was sitting, and mumbled a request for adjournment on grounds only audible to himself. The pencil of the chief judge traced a mark on the Cause List, and the trap-like voice rejoined, "Adjourned for a week. But this is your third adjournment, *Maitre Gribouille*: we shall not grant you another. The second case is '*La Gazette des Boulevards*,' for false news."

The figure of the corpulent editor who talked about the sacerdotal mission of the press, leaned forward suddenly and whispered something in the ear of a barrister with a red face. This man of law rose in an off-hand style, and, with his tongue in his cheek, intimated that he was unprepared, having only been instructed last Monday week. At this a square-set form, hitherto imbedded in the folds of a black gown trimmed with ermine, started up in the pulpit facing Horace, and an indignant face, ornamented with a pair of blue spectacles, cried, "I oppose the adjournment."

"*Monsieur le Procureur Impérial* opposes," snapped the steel trap; "the case shall proceed."

"Then we will let judgment go by default," replied he with the tongue in his cheek! "we can't plead if we're not ready."

There was a general grin, for he with the tongue in his cheek was a legal wag, and his client, the fat editor of the "*Gazette des Boulevards*," was a favorite. But the public prosecutor hereupon leaped up again.

"*Maitre Carrotte*," said he, "I shall not allow judgment to go by default. Your client, *M. de Tirecruchon*, is in court at this moment: if he does not stand forward and plead immediately, I shall request the bench to have him arrested and put into the dock."

"Usher, let no one leave the court," cried the chief judge significantly.

The grinning stopped. The fat editor, looking slightly blue, was seen leaning over and conversing again with the red-faced barrister. The latter, no longer with his tongue in his cheek, then stood up and expostulated meekly. He knew that the prosecution would be perfectly justified in taking the course proposed; but he relied upon the well-known courtesy of *Monsieur le Procureur Impérial*, upon his generous indulgence, upon his universally acknowledged sense of justice, to grant just one more week's respite; and he looked piteously towards the pulpit.

Monsieur the public prosecutor, having vindicated his importance, which was probably all he wanted to do, was graciously pleased to unbend before *Maitre Carrotte's* humility. He announced that he withdrew his opposition for this once, but that such an act of condescension must not be taken as a precedent. *Maitre Carrotte* restored his tongue to its original position in his cheek. The chief judge made a second mark on the cause list with his gold pencil-case, and, for the third time, the steel-trap snapped out: "The next case is *Macrobe versus Roche, Delormay, and Dutison*; action for libel. Are the parties here?"

There was no immediate reply, for *Maitre Giboulet*, the counsel for the plaintiff, being a great gun, had thought it incumbent upon his dignity to remain talking outside until he was being actually waited for. An usher had to go out and call him, and in a minute he came flustering in at the rate of eight miles an hour, mopping his brow with a cambric handkerchief, and followed by a brace of juniors with bags. "I'm for the plaintiff, *Mr. President*," he shouted, lifting his square cap and planting it on his head again.

Horace Gerold stood up, and, as firmly

as he could, said, "And I'm for the defendants."

"The case is opened," proclaimed the chief judge, and in another few seconds Maitre Giboulet had started full gallop into his indictment.

As this is a record of the life and adventures of the two Gerolds, and not a chronicle destined to perpetuate the eloquence of the French bar, it will be as well to make no more than a passing mention of all the fine things which Maitre Giboulet said, and of all that part of the trial which included the examination of the plaintiff, defendants, and witnesses by the trap-voiced judge. To those who know how these things are managed in France, it is quite needless to explain that Maitre Giboulet, who was an Imperialist and an official member of the legislature, animadverted with a great deal of warmth upon that base-born spirit of envy which attached itself to men who had rapidly attained wealth by dint of hard work and enterprise. Yet he did not rant, for he was a good orator, — albeit the chief use to which he put his tongue in the legislative chamber was to cry "Bravo! bravo!" when the ministers spoke. He referred in a few feeling words to the spotless and industrious career of his client, to the esteem in which he was held in all financial circles, "and also by his Majesty the Emperor himself, Mr. President, as you will see when he comes into court by the ribbon of honor on his breast." He then made a brief allusion to the newly founded *Société du Crédit Parisien*, which was to confer priceless boons upon humanity, and the shares of which were already at three hundred francs premium; and he concluded by a dignified protest against the licentiousness of the press, and a prayer that justice would safeguard the sanctity of private life, and indemnify his client by heavy damages for a libel at once groundless, heartless, and malicious.

Maitre Giboulet sat down, and a few of the money-men, who had crept in with borrowed plumes, mumbled "*Très bien!*" the begowned journalists retorting by crying "Hush!" and "Silence!" with great zeal, though with good humor. The cross-questioning of the defendants was then commenced by the presiding judge, who, being an old hand, conducted matters roundly and with a rigid impartiality of which I will try and give an idea.

To Nestor Roche. — "Stand up, sir; your name?"

Nestor Roche. — "My profession is journalism; my address Rue Montmartre."

"Why do you libel honest men?"

"I never libelled an honest man."

"I beg, sir, you won't split straws with me. You have slandered an honest gentleman, a knight of the Legion of Honor, a director of one of the greatest financial companies in Paris; you can have had but one motive, that of sordid envy; and I advise you, if you hope for the indulgence of the court, to make an unreserved apology. On consulting the record of your antecedents, I find you have been imprisoned four times for press offences; twice under the present reign, and twice under the last; you are evidently a danger to society. What have you to say for yourself?"

"That what you call a libel is a true statement. I" —

"Monsieur Roche, I cannot suffer you to bring into court the slanders which you have already endeavored to propagate through your journal. Your misdemeanor is aggravated by this display of effrontery. Stand down!"

The next to come up was M. Max Delormay. Now, M. Max had made up his mind to be very downright and cutting. This is what his resolution came to: —

"Monsieur Delormay, I find you are twenty-five, and the only son of a mother who has tried to bring you up as a respectable member of society. On coming to Paris five years ago, the kindness of Monsieur le Préfet de la Seine obtained for you an appointment as clerk at the Hôtel de Ville; but, last year, you left your place. Were you discharged for misconduct?"

M. Delormay (hotly). — "Certainly not. Who has dared to insinuate such a falsehood? I resigned because I earned only two thousand francs a year, and could gain more than double by my pen."

"Exactly. You preferred the disreputable gains to be had by libelling your betters to the modest salary obtainable by labor in an honorable career. Don't interrupt me, sir; I know what I'm saying. What business has a young man of your age to insult one superior to him in years, social position, and worth? It's a cowardly thing, do you hear, sir? But you may stand down. Your attitude sufficiently shows that I may appeal in vain to you for a spark of contrition and good feeling."

And so down went M. Max, looking very much as if he would like to say something, though too nonplussed to put that something into words.

Next came M. Dutison, the lean and melancholy printer, who observed, dolefully, that seven daily newspapers and eight weekly ones were printed on his premises, and that, with the best intentions in the world, it was utterly beyond his powers to revise them all. He was disposed of in the following terms: —

"Monsieur Dutison, I informed you, when last you were here, that this excuse was shallow and frivolous. A printer should ponder over every line of manuscript before submitting it to his presses. He should be the paternal censor of all the writings put into his hands."

"Yes, and see all his customers go and get their printing done elsewhere," ejaculated M. Dutison, with dismal irony.

"Sir, an honest printer would be consoled for the loss of custom by the possession of a blameless conscience."

M. Dutison seemed to consider this solace insufficient, and was sent back to his seat, with the gratifying assurance that, if he would only wait till by and by, he would see what would happen to him. The presiding judge then called the name of Prosper Macrobe, and the plaintiff was introduced, irreproachably dressed, be-gloved, smugly shaven, and looking the image incarnate of respectability. In the topmost button-hole of his frock-coat flashed a spick-span new piece of scarlet ribbon. He cast a quick glance round the room, leisurely drew off one of his black gloves, and, catching sight of Horace, nodded as amicably to him as if the two had been breakfasting together.

Wondrous was the transformation which the features, voice, and manner of the presiding judge now underwent.

"Monsieur Macrobe, will you be so kind as to answer the usual questions as to name and profession? They are a mere formality."

And, saying this, the steel-trap became softened as though it had been oiled, whilst a deferential smirk irradiated the thin lips of the speaker.

Monsieur Macrobe evinced no objection to furnish all the explanations that were required of him. He briefly stated who he was, hinted that he was uncommonly rich, and hesitated for some polite term by which he could intimate that he cared not two brass stivers what was said about him. The judge was evidently unwilling to keep a man of such parts long on his legs, and, after a couple of totally insignificant questions, would have dismissed him; but Emile, whose usually placid face had been settling into the rigidity of contempt under the influence of this burlesque of justice, nudged his brother and whispered, "Up at him, and cross-question him."

Horace Gerold had been undergoing during ten minutes a sort of wet-blanket infliction from the solicitor on his left, who, in despair at the youth of his client's advocate, repeated mistrustfully, yet with depressing persistency, "Mind and be prudent, Monsieur Gerold—mind and be

prudent." At his brother's exhortation, Horace at once shook off this dotard, and, starting up, looked the plaintiff full in the face, and said, "Monsieur Macrobe, remember you are on your oath. Is it or is it not true that you have been thrice bankrupt? that you obtained a contract which"—

He could get no further. The blue-spectacled visage of Monsieur le Procureur Impérial leaped up in the pulpit like a jack-in-the-box, crying, "I protest!" The two minor judges, aghast with astonishment, exclaimed, "Order!" The presiding judge, quivering with the anger of outraged majesty, shouted, "Maitre Gerold, I recall you to the respect you owe the court. You well know that it is against all rules for the Bar to interrogate a witness otherwise than through the Bench."

Poor Horace apologized. He had, indeed, forgotten this important rule. Reddening, and a little dashed, he resumed, "Will the Bench kindly ask the plaintiff whether"—

"I shall do no such thing, sir," broke in the chief judge, indignantly; and the Public Prosecutor, without any such expression of his opinion being called for, rose anew, and cried, "I move that the question is altogether out of place. The Code lays down that, in cases of libel, it shall not be allowable for the defendants to adduce proofs of their asseverations.* Besides," added the Procureur, with triumphant logic, "even if the defendants possessed the privilege, it would be of no use to them, for we are entirely convinced that their assertions are false."

"Precisely so," assented the chief judge; "the libel is false and malicious, and it is against all law that the defendants should seek to establish the contrary."

Emile turned pale with disgust, and bit his lips savagely. As for Horace, the blood had flowed to his head; he made a couple of steps forward, and for half a moment it looked as if there was going to be a disturbance in court; but the cautious solicitor sprang up in terror, and pulled him back by the gown. "Oh! be prudent, M. Gerold—be prudent," said he. Horace turned with flashing eyes to Nestor Roche, who was seated behind him. "What am I to do?" he asked.

"Do nothing," answered the other, coolly. "Wait till it's your turn to speak, and then pitch in to everybody."

Horace sank into his place. The non-chalance of Nestor Roche discouraged him.

* This law was repealed by the National Assembly in 1871; but only so far as libels against Government functionaries are concerned. A writer libelling a private person is still denied the right of proving that his libel is a truth.

Whilst his liberty was being weighed in the balances of Imperial justice, the Editor was unconcernedly writing a leading article in his note-book with an odd bit of pencil.

Neither of the parties desiring to call witnesses, the fluent Maître Giboulet at once set about delivering a second edition of his opening speech. He thanked the Bench for its impartiality; declared magnanimously that he bore no grudge against his young friend and adversary, Maître Gerold, for having made an abortive attempt to envenom the discussion; and renewed his impressive yet temperate appeal for substantial damages. Everybody admitted that it was a very gentleman-like speech. Maître Giboulet was succeeded by the Public Prosecutor. As this functionary is supposed to intervene on behalf of whichever party he may, after honest consideration, deem aggrieved, it was only natural that he should inveigh with splendid energy against the defendants. "For, indeed," said he, with honest wrath, "who is there among us that would not revolt at the idea of having all his past life disclosed? What hope is there for any honorable man, if papers are suffered to reveal all he said or did ten or twenty years ago? The press, gentlemen, is becoming each day more and more a danger; the landmarks of society must soon be swept away if it be not kept in check. M. Prosper Macrobe will leave the court with the warmest sympathies of all upright minds, whilst his libellers will be branded forever with the stigma of indelible shame."

M. le Procureur was always overpoweringly eloquent in anathematizing periodical literature. It is surprising what a number of prints and journalists he had branded with the stigma of indelible shame.

And now came the important moment when Horace Gerold was to speak. The Public Prosecutor had embedded himself anew in his pulpit, well content with his own oration, and after the usual amount of buzzing, foot-scraping, and coughing that succeeds the delivery of half an hour's speech, a deep hush pervaded the court. The defence is the episode *par excellence* of a press trial. In this instance, too, those who knew the name of the council were a little curious to see how the son of the Tribune Gerold would demean himself.

The beginning was not very promising. For the first time in his life, Horace experienced that disagreeable, and totally indescribable sensation of perceiving every eye in a crowded room fixed on him. Till he opened his mouth, he would never have believed that he could so falter and stammer, and longed that the floor might yawn and

swallow him. He had counted on an easy triumph, for he was full of his subject; but on rising, and hearing the unearthly echo of his own single voice, and feeling beside him the leaden weight of his two arms, which he knew not how to lift or move, all his ideas seemed to go as clean out of his head as though they had been wiped away with a sponge. To add to his composure, the chief judge took the occasion of hinting that he hoped the speech would not be long, as there was really no defence possible.

It was Emile who saved his brother from premature collapse by whispering energetically, "Well said," "That's it," "Perfect," &c. By so doing he drew down on himself the sharp censure of the Bench; but his welcome excitations helped Horace to bridge over the first few moments of emotion, after which the horrible fear of breaking down and becoming ridiculous acted like a tonic, and did the rest. The voice of the speaker, which had been running all wild, and scaling every note in the octave, from the husky to the shrill falsetto, gathered firmness and became controllable. Horace spoke spasmodically, but one by one his ideas returned. He kept his eyes fixed on those of a friend opposite him, whose changes of expression served him as beacons. Gradually he warmed to his subject; the trumps were all in his hand; arguments began to crowd upon him. A low murmur of approbation soon told him that he had struck upon the right path, and was making straight for the sympathies of his audience. The last remnant of nervousness forsook him. He spoke out flatly, plainly, fearlessly. The judges, who at first had thrown themselves back in their chairs, leaned forward and stared uneasily; the Public Prosecutor, who had affected to prepare himself for a quiet nap, glared from behind his blue spectacles as if he was getting more than he had bargained for. Encouraged, emboldened, Horace Gerold branched out from the main argument of his plea into an appeal of that kind which always finds an echo in Frenchmen, and which, in times of oppression, sets fire to them like tinder. He spoke of lost liberties, and there was a thrill. The dullest can be eloquent on such a theme; and young Gerold, who was not a dullard, threw out the burning words with a fervor of earnestness that quickly stirred his hearers to the marrow. There are crowds whom it takes a great deal to move; next to nothing is required to animate a French crowd. It seemed to some of the spectators present as though in the excited young orator before them, they saw the image of the rising generation standing forth to protest against the cowardice of its fathers which had

handed France over to slavery. A loud explosion of murmurs greeted an unwise attempt of the chief judge to check the speaker. The judge desisted, cowed; and from that moment the success of Horace Gerold was sealed. The arms no longer hung like lead now; they moved with the simple but magnificent gestures of scorn and defiance; the face was flushed, the hair thrown back; faster and faster fell the words, louder and braver grew the denunciations, until at last the speaker stopped amidst a tremendous uproar. Everybody in court had risen; enthusiastic cries of "Bravo" shook the rafters; the three judges, on their feet, and livid with rage were shouting, "You shall apologize!" Nestor Roche had rushed from out of his place and embraced Horace, kissing him on both cheeks, French fashion: Emile, with tears streaming from his eyes, was wringing his brother's hand and crying, "Well done, Horace; admirably spoken."

"You shall apologize," vociferated the Bench. "You said 'corrupt judges;' we will have an instant apology."

"Did I say 'corrupt judges?'" asked Horace, and indeed it was in perfect good faith he put the question, for he could not have told for the life of him what he had been saying.

"An instant apology!" roared the judges.

"An humble apology," yelped the Public Prosecutor.

Apologize at such a moment! Apologize when a score of hands were being stretched out to him, and tongues were repeating clamorously, "Bravo, bravo!" In a clear, ringing voice, Horace replied, "I shall never retract. I said 'corrupt judges,' and I maintain the term."

The Public Prosecutor immediately cried, "Maitre Gerold has been guilty of an outrageous contempt of court. I pray that the Bench will use its discretionary powers to punish him." There was no doubt about the contempt of court; the three judges caught up their caps, and swept out of the room by the door behind the dais to deliberate.

Impossible to describe the scene in court during their absence. Barristers, journalists, left their seats and scrambled over desks and forms, to cluster round Horace and shake hands with him. Half an hour before he had been a simple, struggling, and pretty nearly briefless advocate; now he was a hero. "Well said, indeed," "Your speech was inimitable," "You called the *coup-d'état* a crime; give me your hand; you're my friend." Such were a few amongst the hundred exclamations that rose like fuses from out of the transported throng. It was in vain that the ushers

sought to impose silence; they were bidden hold their peace, and jostled with ignominy — the noise was deafening. One must witness such a scene to realize it. In the midst of it all, as cool as a cucumber, M. Prosper Macrobe bustled forward, seized Horace's hand like the rest, and exclaimed, "My young friend, admiration knows no camp; splendid speech: always knew you'd make your way." At which the spectators around clapped their hands, thinking this was truly manly behavior on the financier's part. M. Macrobe had quite relied upon this impression; that enterprising man never laid out any thing save at interest.

At the end of twenty minutes the judges returned. Horace was perfectly aware that he was going to get his share of whatever penalty was in store, but this did not affect him in the least — neither, I fancy, did the other thought, that his fine speech had perhaps not done overmuch for his client's interest. There was no need to proclaim silence anew: the lull in the court was instantaneous. When the judges reached their place, one could have heard a *gnat* fly. The chief judge held two written judgments in his hand. Still white with rage, and in a loud, rasping voice, he read out the first: —

"Whereas the newspaper 'La Sentinelle' published in its number of the 15th April, 1855, a note beginning with the words, 'We noticed in yesterday's "Moniteur,"' and ending with the words 'a *bonne* enterprise;' and whereas the said note contains a wilful and malicious libel affecting the character and reputation of M. Prosper Macrobe;

"And whereas the said M. Prosper Macrobe never gave cause of just offence to the defendants, so that it is evident the libel can only proceed from a wanton spirit of mischief;

"Whereas the defendant, Max Delormay, wrote the note, knowing it to be libellous;

"And the defendant, Nestor Roche, editor, inserted it in the newspaper 'La Sentinelle,' likewise knowing it to be libellous;

"And the defendant, Dutison, printer, rendered himself accessory to the misdemeanor by printing the said note:

"The Court,

"Conformably to the conclusions of the Public Prosecutor,

"Condemns

"Nestor Roche to six months' imprisonment, and a fine of five thousand francs;

"Max Delormay to six months' imprisonment, and a fine of five thousand francs:

"Dutison to two months' imprisonment, and a fine of two thousand francs ;

"And the three defendants conjointly to pay five and twenty thousand francs damages to the plaintiff, together with all the costs of the trial."

Then came the second judgment : —

"Whereas Maitre Horace Gerold, advocate, practising at the Imperial Court of Paris, did on the — th day of April, 1855, speaking in the Court of Correctional Police, render himself guilty of a gross contempt of court, by uttering words reflecting on the honor of the Magistracy ;

"And whereas the said Maitre Gerold, on being summoned to retract his words and tender an apology, refused to do so ;

"The Court,

"Conformably to the conclusions of the Public Prosecutor, and by virtue of its discretionary powers,

"Condemns

"Maitre Horace Gerold to be disbarred from pleading in any Court of the French Empire during a period of six months."

That evening Horace Gerold was the most talked-of man in all Paris.

CHAPTER VIII.

SWEETS AND BITTERS OF POPULARITY.

POPULARITY does not come or go by halves in Paris ; it encircles or forsakes one with all the suddenness of a change of wind. Previously to Horace's sensation speech, the brothers had led very retired lives, paying few visits, and being themselves little visited, save by one or two young barristers of their own age, who had been their companions during their student-days. On the morrow of the speech there was not a café in Paris, not a club-house, not a drawing-room, where Horace Gerold was not the leading subject of conversation. For the moment, he supplanted Sebastopol, which the Allies were doing their very best to take, without succeeding.

It may seem strange that the maiden speech of an unknown barrister should have been able to effect such a commotion ; but stranger things than that used to happen in those days. Considered soberly, the speech was not a master-work. It failed a good deal in plain logic, and as a defence on behalf of accused men it was disastrous, for it had, without any doubt, caused the penalty

of the defendants to be doubled. But Horace had had the striking merit of speaking out the truth flatly at a moment when scarcely anybody dared speak at all. Herein lay his success.

He was also helped a good deal into public favor by the fact that the judges had disbarred him for six months. To get one's clients sentenced to six months' imprisonment instead of three is well — it is like inserting the thin end of the wedge ; but to get one's self disbarred into the bargain is splendid — it is like driving the wedge bodily in.

According to the courteous usage of a time when avowed Liberals were so few that they deemed themselves all friends, Horace Gerold received a congratulatory call from most of the men of mark in Paris. Nineteen-twentieths of the members of the bar, pretty nearly every one of the students in the School of Law, and some three or four score opposition journalists, left their cards upon him.* It was a singular procession, which lasted three days, to the mingled consternation and pride of M. Pochemolle — consternation, because the honest draper could not but wince at the sight of so much factiousness incarnate walking up his staircases ; pride, because the good man worshipped success, and felt all the importance of possessing a lodger who was getting on so famously.

After the cards came the anonymous letters and the albums ; the former mostly eulogistic and feminine (there must be women who have an uncommon amount of time to lose), the latter feminine also, and accompanied by notes praying M. Horace Gerold kindly to write a few verses, a sentiment, or any thing in the world, provided only he signed his name to it. After this arrived the artist of a comic paper, who requested leave to portray Horace with a head three times bigger than his body. This was the *ne plus ultra*. When a gentleman asks permission to draw you with a big head you have reached the acme of celebrity. Fame can do nothing more for you.

We must not forget the bank-note of 500 francs, which Horace Gerold received as his *honorarium*. There had been no previous agreement as to fee, no allusion even to the subject ; but on the day following the trial Nestor Roche sent his counsel a simple and affectionate letter, in which he said, "The usual way, my dear Horace, is for the solicitors to settle these affairs ; but

* As an historical illustration of this graceful custom, it may be mentioned that, in 1867, after his very remarkable speech in the Senate in defence of free thought, the late Monsieur Sainte Beuve received no less than 12,300 cards. Liberalism was gathering strength then.

there had better be no formalism between you and me. I am just off to pay nine and thirty thousand francs into court — twelve thousand for fines, five-and-twenty thousand for damages, and two thousand for costs. I would pay the whole cheerfully enough, if I might forward it to you along with enclosed; but I confess it rather goes against my heart to enrich the citizen Macrobe. However, I am not angling for sympathy; your speech has done a fine stroke of work for the 'Sentinelle:' we sold twenty thousand copies more than usual this morning."

All this was the bright side of the picture, but there was also a dark side, or at least a side rather less agreeable. Horace was sitting in his study some two or three mornings after his triumph, when he was startled by a knock much more rapid and less ceremonious than visitors are accustomed to give. He was alone, Emile being absent at the law courts, and he had just finished a letter to his father, which was lying unfolded before him. On going to open the door it caused him some surprise to find Mdlle. Georgette.

"O M. Horace!" she said blushing terribly, "I've run up to tell you that I think the police are coming to search your rooms."

"The police?" and Horace showed Mdlle. Georgette into his study, shutting the door behind her.

"Yes, yes," she continued, hurriedly; "ever since you made your speech there have been two such curious men loafing on the pavement outside the house: great ugly men with big sticks. I believe they took down the names of most of the gentlemen who have called on you these last few days; and yesterday evening when you were out, you and M. Emile, they came in with M. Louchard, the commissary of police, and wanted to search your rooms; but papa wouldn't let them."

"What could they want to search our rooms for?"

"I don't know, M. Horace," answered Mdlle. Georgette, contemplating him half-naïvely, half in terror. "M. Louchard said you and M. Emile were dangers to the Government, and that he'd got his orders about you from the prefect; and when papa refused to let him have the key of your rooms during your absence, he said he'd come back to-day when you were at home, and made papa promise not to say about his having been here; but I didn't promise: for M. Louchard didn't know I heard him."

"It's very good of you to give me this warning, Mdlle. Georgette," said Horace, with a look of gratitude; "but," added he, throwing a glance round the room, "I

don't think the police can find any thing dangerous here."

"Have you no letters from friends, no books against the government," asked Mdlle. Georgette, with ready woman's wit.

Horace hesitated a moment, and then struck his forehead: "Dear me, what am I thinking of?" he cried; "thanks a hundred times for reminding me;" and he went to a book-shelf half filled with volumes of that uncomplimentary kind which the presses of Belgium used to send forth, and send forth still, in such numbers against the Emperor of the French. There were Belgian papers, too, brought by the brothers when they came into France — papers interdicted by the police, and the importation of which was punishable with fines and imprisonment. Horace spread a towel on the floor, laid all this anti-dynastic literature upon it, emptied a drawer-full of his father's letters on to the heap, and tied up the whole into a bundle. But when he had done this: — "And now, where am I to put it all," he said, rather helplessly? — "We've no hiding-place that will be safe from M. Louchard."

"Give the bundle to me," replied Georgette looking at him. "I'll hide it in my room; they won't come and search there."

Horace fixed his eyes on the spirited girl, and said with a little wonder, "What have I done, Mdlle. Georgette, that you should act in so kindly a way towards me."

"Why shouldn't I save you from getting into trouble if I can?" answered Georgette, in a would-be indifferent voice, with perhaps just the faintest tremor in it. She took up the bundle, and, without looking at him, added, "I must go now, M. Horace; good-by." And in another minute she was gone.

Horace Gerold did not at once move; he remained standing a few moments where he was, gazing at the spot on which Georgette had stood. Then he returned to his seat and slowly folded the letter he had been writing.

This simple operation must have taken him a long while, for he was still engaged in it when a sharp rap at the outer door gave him to infer that the promised M. Louchard had arrived.

True enough. This time it was not a pair of bright hazel eyes, and a pink, bashful face that met him; but three individuals buttoned up to the throat. The commissary and his two satellites, MM. Fouineux and Tournetrique, of the secret police.

One must have lived in countries where the police is the despised, ever-ready tool of a hated government, to realize the in-

effable look of disdain with which Horace Gerold received his visitors.

"I am a commissary of police" — began M. Louchard.

"That information is superfluous; your profession is written on your face," answered Horace, curtly. "I suppose you have come to ransack my rooms. Here are my keys; get your job done as soon as possible."

Even MM. Fouineux and Tournetrique, who were accustomed enough to be spat upon, looked a little sheepish at this greeting. Horace had not given the keys into M. Louchard's hands, but thrown them on the floor for him to pick up. The commissary, who was a man of education, red-dened.

The three followed Horace into his study. They kept their hats on, seeing which, the young man said, peremptorily, "Take your hats off in my room." It was not the custom of the three honest gentlemen to uncover themselves when paying domiciliary visits; but the expression of Horace Gerold's features was not pleasant in moments of anger. The police hate fighting about trifles. They took their hats off.

Without thinking of what he was doing, Horace went to his desk to resume the operation of closing and sealing his letter, in which he had been twice interrupted. In a trice, M. Louchard was down upon him with a swoop, made a grab at the letter, and snatched it out of his hand. "I beg pardon; that's a letter," he said. "I must have all letters."

"Ah, to be sure," rejoined Horace, unconcernedly; and, throwing himself into an arm-chair, he took up a newspaper, which he read without paying any more attention to his guests.

It is the admirable privilege of all Frenchmen to be liable at any moment to a search visit, and to see all their papers fingered and confiscated. They have no right of appeal; no right, even, to know why their property is being violated. And the search is no mere formality. Messrs. Louchard, Fouineux, and Tournetrique remained above an hour ferreting in Horace Gerold's bedroom and study. They turned up the corners of the carpets, routed out the drawers and cupboards, probed the mattresses, pillows, and curtains, and made a parcel, not only of such letters as they could find, but of every scrap of paper, however small, that bore a line of handwriting, tradesmen's bills not excepted. The object of a search is to obtain all the details possible as to the searchee's habits and acquaintances, and a tradesman's bill may be as instructive a document for this purpose as any other. There was a sheet

of blotting-paper on which Horace had scribbled a list of a few friends who had sent him civil letters which needed answering. Messrs. Louchard and Co. took that. There was a japanned bowl which served as receptacle for the thousand and odd visiting cards which Horace had received after his speech. The young barrister was, not unnaturally, proud of these friendly trophies, and had contemplated keeping them as mementoes. Monsieur Tournetrique shovelled them all into his pocket-handkerchief, tied the handkerchief into a knot, and dropped it into the tail pocket of his coat.

Horace did not stir. Only, at the end of an hour, when the three representatives of justice and imperialism had inspected his own rooms, they were for going into Emile's. In order to do this they were obliged to pass Horace, whose chair was so situated that it blocked the door of communication between the two sets of apartments. On the first man presenting himself, Horace stood up and said, "Where are you going?"

"To search those other rooms," answered M. Louchard.

"Those rooms are my brother's," rejoined Horace quietly.

"Monsieur, we have orders to search your brother's rooms as well as yours."

"If my brother chooses to let you search his rooms I have nothing to say," was Horace's impassive reply; "but in his absence I am the defender of his property. No one goes in there whilst I am here."

"Do you mean to say you intend resisting by force?" asked M. Louchard, taken aback.

Horace caught up the fire-tongs that were lying close within his reach.

"Yes," he said calmly.

To do M. Louchard and consorts justice, it was not the fear of a broken head that made them pause. If Horace Gerold had been an ordinary rebel — a mere journalist for instance — the three would have fallen upon him together, knocked him down, handcuffed him, and bundled him off to the station in a cab to be charged with threatening to do grievous bodily harm to government functionaries. But a barrister is an awkward adversary. The barristers form a powerful corporation, and if one of them were knocked down, the Council of the Order, with the "Bâtonnier" at its head, would certainly insist upon reparation. M. Louchard was quite perspicuous enough to guess that this reparation would probably consist in his own dismissal. He thought it prudent to temporize.

"Monsieur, I am only doing my duty," he observed.

"And I mine," rejoined Horace. "But

it is no use wasting further words. You have two courses open to you, either to wait until my brother returns, or to go and find him at the Palace of Justice and tell him that you want his help to turn his rooms upside down."

Monsieur Louchard did not smile at this joke, but he accepted the former of the two alternatives, after venturing upon one or two more remonstrances to which Horace did not even deign to give a reply. When Emile returned about a couple of hours afterwards, he found his brother composedly smoking a cigarette, with a pair of fire-tongs in his hand, and the three myrmidons of the law seated in a row opposite, looking at him.

On being told what was the matter, Emile threw down his keys as disdainfully as Horace had done. MM. Louchard, Fouineux, and Tournetrique thereupon resumed their search, repeating their conscientious investigation of beds, cupboards, and carpets, and making an abundant harvest of paper scraps as before. In Emile's rooms, however, occurred an episode which Horace had not foreseen; for, in exploring the top drawer on the left-hand side of the bureau, the detective Fouineux lighted upon the tin box which contained the title-deed of the Clairefontaine estates. Emile interposed, observing it was only a family document; but this was reason the more why M. Louchard should keep firm hold of it. Delighted to have got possession of something that looked valuable, the commissary took the box from his subaltern and expressed his determination not to part with it on any account.

"But what can you do with it?" cried Horace, more amused than angry; "I tell you it's only a title-deed."

At the word title-deed M. Louchard redoubled his grip of the box, and resolved in his own deep mind that he had captured a prize. He set himself in the immediate vicinity of the door, ready to bolt if any attempt at snatching should be made; and in a quick voice directed his satellites to make haste and get done. This injunction had the effect of abridging the search by about half-an-hour. Less than ten minutes after the discovery of the box, the brothers were left alone, MM. Louchard, Fouineux, and Tournetrique having returned to the prefecture; where, amongst other things, they were mindful to state that Maître Horace Gerold was "a dangerous man of murderous propensity," an observation that was scrupulously recorded in that famous and mysterious ledger, in which are inscribed the names of all those who, at any time, and for any reason, have been brought under the notice of the French police.

This domiciliary visit was destined to have ulterior consequences that influenced in no slight degree the careers of the Gerolds; but the only immediate effect of it was to make the two brothers laugh, and to raise Horace a cubit higher on his newly erected pedestal. The explorations of M. Louchard furnished a capital paragraph for "La Sentinelle;" the Liberals of the Boulevard waxed indignant; and the general opinion of the public was that this young barrister must be a very remarkable man, since the Government evinced such spite towards him. So true is it that despotism sets a halo upon those whom it tries to persecute.

Emile profited by his brother's triumphs. At the very moment when MM. Louchard, Fouineux, and Tournetrique were making hay amongst Horace's papers, the younger brother was being retained in three or four press-trials, at the Palace of Justice. These briefs would have fallen to Horace had he not been disbarred; but the journalists who retained Emile thought that he would no doubt follow in his brother's footsteps and make a sensation speech, perhaps even more violent than the other. In this, however, they were disappointed. When the first of the trials came on the court was crammed to bursting, and the defendants, whose paper had not been selling very well of late, were building up soothing hopes on a rattling sentence of fine and imprisonment, which should quadruple their circulation and give them the *locus standi* of martyrs. But Emile's speech was so simple that it took everybody by surprise. There were no flights of oratory in it, no attempts at declamation, no allusions to the *coup-d'état*. It was a plain, lucid piece of argumentation, full of truth, admirably compact, and couched in language as unpretending as it was respectful. The judges did not acquit the prisoners—that, of course, was out of the question—but they were so much relieved that they only inflicted a month's imprisonment, without any fine at all; a result which transported the solicitors present, who at once marked down Emile Gerold for brief in the civil courts; but which not a little chagrined the journalists, who confided one to another their chagrined impression that Emile had not the same brilliant talent as his brother.

CHAPTER IX.

HORACE STARTS IN JOURNALISM.

IT would be fair to suppose that after the pretty rough handling he had got from

Nestor Roche's counsel, M. Macrobe would have renounced all further acquaintance with the Gerolds. But M. Macrobe's was a soul devoid of vindictiveness. Perfectly conversant with the fact that Horace Gerold was heir to a dukedom, and that he would some day inherit at least 500,000 francs a year, the financier had allowed himself to indulge in certain private schemes with regard to the young man, and he was not to be balked of them for a few ugly words, more or less. It was a maxim with M. Macrobe that where there's a will there's a way, and his will was to become Horace Gerold's friend. How he was to profit by the friendship when he had obtained it, and in what particular direction he was to work his schemes, were points upon which he had not altogether made up his mind, having never yet had the opportunity of becoming thoroughly acquainted with either of the brothers. But, like a skilful angler who knows of a fish in a certain pond, which he will proceed to hook when he has the time, so M. Macrobe bore Horace Gerold in his mind, resolving that he would "land" him some day, and determined meanwhile to lose no opportunity of throwing out clever baits. Within a week of the trial the two MMs. Gerold received a card from Madame Roderheim, wife of the partner in the firm Lecoq, Roderheim and Macrobe, inviting them to a *thé d'ansant*.

Now, if this card had come by post, or been deposited with the concierge by one of Madame Roderheim's plushed footmen, Horace and Emile, out of deference to their father's request that they should keep on amicable terms with MM. L. and R., would, on the appointed evening, have put themselves into dress clothes and have gone through the civility, which consists in driving two miles to bow to a lady in a low-bodied dress, drink a cup of weak tea, and then drive home again. But, unfortunately, it was M. Isidore Macrobe who left the card (indeed, it was he who had especially asked it of Madame Roderheim), and this circumstance was not long in becoming known to Horace, to whom the missive was delivered by Mademoiselle Georgette, despatched by her father on this embassy.

Mademoiselle Georgette was very glad to be the bearer of the note. It was on the day following the visit of the commissary, and she was anxious to return the young barrister his parcel of contraband books and papers, which had lain hidden in one of her bonnet-boxes a day and a night. Perhaps she would not have been sorry even had she had no books to give back, but this thought was one that lurked too deep for human eyes, and one which she would have rejected with the utmost

spirit, had any silent voice within ventured to whisper it to her.

With a slight flutter at the heart, due possibly to the number of steps she had been climbing, and to the fear lest anybody should see her on the staircase with the suspicious bundle, Mademoiselle Georgette knocked as she had done the preceding day. It being about four, Horace was alone as before, but he was just preparing to go out. The young man would have found it difficult to explain why he colored at the sight of the draper's daughter; but color he did, and so did Mademoiselle Georgette.

"Here are your books, M. Horace, and a letter," she said.

She was going to retire after this, but Horace stopped her, saying, thankfully, "Do you know, Mademoiselle Georgette, I have been reflecting all night that you have rendered me a great service. If those books had been found here they might very well have furnished a pretext for indicting me as a Revolutionist. You have probably saved me from imprisonment."

She took no pains to hide the gleam of pleasure in her eyes, but answered with candor: "You thanked me yesterday. I am glad I have been of use to you. But" (and here she looked up at him a little timidly) "why do you expose yourself to being imprisoned?"

"Oh, prison is not very dreadful!" he answered smiling.

"Then the service I have rendered you is not so very great," rejoined she, biting her red lips and smiling in her turn.

"I mean," laughed Horace, embarrassed — "I mean that prison in our case doesn't mean iron chains and a straw bed. I was just going to see some prisoners when you came in; I daresay I shall find them comfortably enough lodged; but loss of liberty is always a hardship, Mademoiselle Georgette."

"I suppose you are going to see those gentlemen whom you defended," remarked Georgette, feeling some little curiosity on a subject so profoundly novel to her as the captivity of gentlemen connected with the Press. Mademoiselle Georgette was an occasional reader of the Official "Moniteur," the only daily journal which M. Pochemolle deemed it consistent with his opinions to take in.

Horace nodded.

"I am going to Sainte Pélagie to see M. Roche and M. Delormay, who were to surrender to-day. Shall I tell them that you sympathize with their misfortune?"

"You may tell them so if you like," answered Mademoiselle Georgette, gravely, "though I think you would do better to tell

them not to write any more against M. Macrobe. Why is it that all you gentlemen are so much against M. Macrobe?" she continued, yielding to the temptation of conversing for once with a person whose whole soul was not enwrapped in cloth and calico. "I thought he was a friend of yours, M. Horace."

"Not of mine, Mademoiselle Georgette; I know very little about him, and that little is not to his advantage."

"He has a very lovely daughter," observed Mademoiselle Georgette, gazing rather steadfastly at her interlocutor.

"So he has," replied Horace, recalling the fair hair and seraph-like expression of Mademoiselle Angélique; "but the daughter doesn't change the father. He would be a bold man who married Mademoiselle Angélique and accepted any dowry with her."

These words did not seem to displease Georgette, but she replied generously: "Are you quite sure, M. Horace, as to all they say about M. Macrobe? Papa thinks so highly of him, for he is always very good to us. Though he lives right at the other end of the town now, he comes to us whenever he wants to buy any thing. He was here to-day and offered papa some shares in that new *Société du Crédit Parisien* which is making so much noise."

"Oh! M. Macrobe was here to-day, was he?" exclaimed Horace, interested.

"Why, yes; that letter comes from him; at least it was he who brought it."

Horace opened the letter with evident curiosity; but when he had inspected the contents he was amused, and said, "It appears to be your vocation to do me good turns, Mademoiselle Georgette; yesterday you saved me from prison, to-day you have kept me out of a trap."

"What trap?" asked Georgette innocently.

Horace was on the point of holding out his hand to Mademoiselle Georgette, but he checked himself and answered gently: "It would take too long to explain, and I don't think it would much interest you."

Georgette looked surprised, but she was beginning to reflect, that she had been talking long enough. She did not, however, return to the shop down stairs for another five minutes, and when she entered, her brother, M. Alcibiade Pochemolle (occupied in catching flies pending the receipt of custom), was the first to notice that she was a little pale, and held a parcel in her hands; which she at once went and showed her mother. This is how Mademoiselle Georgette came by the parcel.

Just as she was about to bring her interview with Horace Gerold to an end, the

latter had opened a drawer and taken out of some silver paper a handsome work-box which he had bought the evening before. It was one of those admirable and expensive knickknacks such as are only to be found in Paris—a thing of rosewood with silver-gilt corners and fittings, ivory silk-reels, satin lining, and golden thimble. To tell the truth, the better part of Nester Roche's 500-franc note had been bestowed on the purchase.

"I want you to accept this box, Mademoiselle Georgette, as a souvenir," said Horace, before the young girl had even divined his intention.

Georgette was so unprepared for the present, that she turned first red, then white, and echoed in a pained tone: "*À souvenir!* Are you going away then?"

"No, I am not going away; but a hundred things may happen, and I should like you to accept this keepsake whilst the recollection of your thoughtful kindness of yesterday is still fresh with us both. Don't refuse," added he, seeing that Georgette looked hurt by his offer; "I shall tell Madame Pochemolle it is a gift in return for the number of letters you have had the trouble of bringing me, and if you refuse I will offer you the box in her presence." He said this gayly; but it was in a more serious tone he repeated, "Accept it, the same spirit as it is offered, Mademoiselle Georgette; if you refuse I shall think you consider me guilty of impertinence."

"You would be wrong to think that," she murmured quietly; yet she still looked pained, and it was only after Horace had taken the box and gently forced it into her hands that, not to wound him, she consented to keep it. There was an incident that helped to silence her objections. It has been said that Horace's parcel of books had been hidden by Mademoiselle Georgette in a bonnet-box. There were a few artificial flowers lying in this box, and one of them—a moss-rose-bud—had clung by its wire-stem to the folds of the towel in which the books were wrapped and been brought up, unnoticed by Georgette. Horace saw the rose, and, when he had placed the work-box in Georgette's hands, unfastened it and said, "May I, too, have my souvenir, Mademoiselle Georgette; will you let me keep this flower?" At this, the look of pain vanished altogether from the young girl's face. She threw him a rapid look, loaded with gratitude and happiness, and fled. But her emotion had not yet disappeared when she returned down stairs and—as already chronicled—encountered the gaze of M. Alcibiade Pochemolle.

M. Pochemolle senior was delighted with the gift. There are drapers who might

prick up their ears at hearing that their laughter had been presented with a costly work-box by a gentleman on the third floor; but M. Pochemolle was of the old school; he believed in social distinctions: and just as he would have deemed it presumption to think of marrying his daughter to any one above her sphere, so he had a sort of honest and chivalrous confidence that no man in Monsieur Gerold's position would ever trifle with the affections of his child. Madame Pochemolle, though not quite so humble in her matrimonial views respecting Mademoiselle Georgette, was also pleased with the present; she might have looked grave at a brooch or a locket, but a work-box was such a brotherly offering, that it proved the purest motives on the part of the young barrister. As for M. Alcibiade, he was all enthusiasm, wondered what was the price of the box, and would have been greatly astonished had he heard that his sister had ever refused such a gift. M. Alcibiade was of the new school of tradesmen.

"Georgette, my child," said M. Pochemolle, "we must make M. Horace some return for this. It is a pity that young gentleman is a Republican; but he has the courtesy and gallantry of a count. Let me see: what can we do for him? Ha, I have it: Alcibiade, measure your sister four yards of the finest lawn, Cambrai mark, and she shall inaugurate her box by hemming M. Horace a dozen pair of bands to wear in court. Meantime, give me my hat and gloves; I must go and offer my dutiful thanks to our lodger."

And the thanks of M. Pochemolle were all that could be desired. He met Horace Gerold on the staircase, and made him a bow such as would not have disgraced that famous lace-purveyor of the Prince of Condé, who was said to bow better than the Prince himself. And the same hour Mademoiselle Georgette set to work upon the cambric bands, cutting and stitching with a diligence that somewhat surprised M. Alcibiade, who remembered that his sister never worked so fast when she had to hem any of his pocket-handkerchiefs.

Now, are we to conclude from this gift of a work-box that Horace Gerold, the heir of the Hautbourgs, or, what is more to the purpose, the rising pleader already renowned in Paris for his good looks, his good luck, and his eloquence, entertained any deeper feeling towards the draper's daughter than the parents of that young lady suspected? Maidens of Mademoiselle Georgette's age are apt to imagine that every soft word, playful smile, and kind glance are so many indications of attachment, and poor Georgette, as she hemmed the cambric bands, doubtless built many a fancy man-

sion that would have crumbled into dust could she have witnessed the extremely leisurely gait and placid air of M. Horace as he went on his way to visit his friends at Ste. Pélagie. Lovers do not wear the expression that Horace Gerold wore. He trod the pavement like a man who is exempt from cares of every sort; whose blood flows cheerily in his veins, and who would not change his present lot for a kingdom. Well-a-day, how far he was from thinking of Clairefontaine now, and what a good joke he would have considered it, had any long-headed soothsayer lifted the veil of the future and shown him—but why anticipate? let us follow the young man on his visit to the prison.

Sainte Pélagie is a fine gray building, devoted, like the Sixth Chamber of Correctional Police, half-and-half to the accommodation of thieves and of journalists; the thieves occupy the back part; the journalists the front. Let us be just, however, towards the Imperial Government. When a journalist was sentenced in the courts of the Empire, he was not laid hold of there and then in the dock, and carted off to bondage in a van, as is done in certain freer countries. He was left to surrender pretty much when he pleased (save in very exceptional cases). He might take a fortnight, or a month; sometimes he took three months; and when he at last made up his mind to go and be locked up, he drove to his destination in a cab, bearing his boxes, portmanteaus, and writing materials with him, and leaving word with his friends to come and call upon him, just as if he was off for a hydropathic establishment, and was merely about to undergo a few months' cure.

Of course the Government was not bound to make things thus pleasant, and occasionally, when sulkily disposed, it would order that such and such a captive journalist be rendered as miserable as possible by being debarred from all intercourse with the outer world. But such instances of waspishness were not common. It was always borne in mind that the imprisoned writer of to-day may be the cabinet minister of to-morrow; journalism being a career that leads to any thing—provided you abandon it.

Horace Gerold's purpose in visiting Sainte Pélagie was two-fold; in the first place he had a duty of common courtesy to perform, and in the next, being thrown out of work by his six months' interdiction, he wished to ask for employment on the staff of the "Sentinelle." He found Nestor Roche installed in a room that looked much more like an apartment in a middle-class boarding-house than a cell in a prison. It was tolerably large, the walls were pa-

pered, there was a carpet on the floor, and two workmen were engaged in nailing up a bookcase, which Roche had obtained permission to bring with him, as well as a bureau, a couple of easy-chairs, an enormous ottoman, and a shower-bath. On a peg above a small camp bedstead hung the monumental hat of the captive, which at once arrested the eye like the helmet of a cloistered knight; and the captive himself was seated at a table smoking a meerschau pipe and correcting a proof, whilst a printer's devil, his legs tucked up on the bar of a chair, was waiting to carry the said proof to the printing-office.

"*Salve, puer*," exclaimed Roche, holding out his hand, "I shall have done in a minute. Meanwhile, you'll find Delormay at home; he's next door."

M. Max Delormay had not arrived above an hour and was standing in his shirt-sleeves amidst a litter of portmanteaus and carpet-bags, from which he was extracting bottles of eau-de-cologne, hair-brushes, pots of pomatum, razor-strops, and the adjuncts of a well-furnished toilet-table. M. Max felt deeply grateful to Horace Gerold for having secured him six months' imprisonment. Ever since his sentence, the value of his signature as a writer had risen considerably in the literary market. A whole collection of articles, tales, and sketches, of which he had been utterly unable to dispose in the days of his freedom, had passed triumphantly into the columns of various broad-sheets the moment he had become a martyr. Moreover, he had obtained promotion on the staff of the "*Sentinel*," having been raised from the note and paragraph department to that of leader-writing. Encouraged by these results, M. Max felt equal to facing any amount of persecution for the truth's sake. He shook Horace warmly by the hand, planted him in a chair, and offered him a cigar.

"You'll stay and dine with us, I hope? We make up a capital mess: Roche and I, two writers of the '*Siècle*,' Jules Tartine of the '*Gazette des Boulevards*,' and three members of a secret society who are in here for two months more; the famous Albi's one of them. We're to mess in Roche's room, dinner from the restaurant over the way, one franc fifty centimes a head. Here, you, my friend, just cut down stairs to the canteen and get us a pint of cognac, two lemons, some sugar, and a jug of hot water; catch hold of the money."

This order was addressed to what appeared a workman, who was putting M. Max's clothes in a chest of drawers. Like the two workmen in Nestor Roche's room, he was attired in gray garments, and wore his hair cropped close to his head.

"Most intelligent man," remarked Max Delormay, when his attendant had vanished. "The Government, you know, gives us some of our fellow-prisoners from the other part of the building to wait upon us. We have one between three. They are chosen for their good behavior. I dare say you saw those in Roche's room. One's in, I believe, for spoiling the good looks of a policeman; the other for putting stones through the window of a publican who refused him credit. This one of mine used to make mistakes in computing the change to which his fares were entitled, and then molest them when they objected. He was a cab-driver, and means to reform when he gets out."

The cabman who made mistakes returned with the cognac, lemons, &c., and declared himself competent to brew, "*un grog*," if need were. Soon after, the voice of Nestor Roche was heard shouting, "I've finished now," and M. Max accompanied Horace into the other room, each bearing their share of the refreshments. The printer's devil, a boy with one eye (but what a conspicuous one was that single orbit!), had slid off his chair, and was receiving directions not to loiter with the proof by the wayside. He snivelled as he listened, and, I regret to state, more than once made use of his sleeve in guise of pocket-handkerchief.

"Have you any copy, M'sieu Delormay?" inquired he, upon the entrance of this gentleman.

M. Max had no copy; but he laid a hand on the shaggy poll of the small Cyclops, and bade him tell his name to Horace Gerold.

The boy fixed his one eye on Horace, and answered sturdily, "My name's Tripou, but they calls me Trigger."

"And now tell M. Gerold why they call you Trigger."

"They calls me Trigger," answered the young Tripou with pride, "because in '51, when there was the fighting, and I was seven years old, I prigg'd the gun of a sentry at the Louvre, when he wasn't looking, and shot him through the head with it."

"Good lad!" exclaimed M. Max, dismissing him. "You'll grow up to be a valuable citizen,"—an assurance which encouraged Trigger to add, for the enlightenment of the stranger, "The gun kicked, and that's how I lost my eye."

The presence of two gentlemen in gray proving an impediment to confidential intercourse, nothing was done but grog-sipping and cloud-blowing for a quarter of an hour or so; but when the bookcase had been nailed up, the shower-bath established in its corner, and the ottoman wheeled near the fireplace, the gentlemen in gray van-

ished, and then Horace plunged at once in *medias res* by saying, "I've come to ask you to take me on your staff, M. Roche."

"H'm," grunted the editor from out of a curling wreath of shag-smoke. "Does our condition seem so delightful as to tempt you to become one of us?"

"If you think me good enough," was Horace's modest reply.

"You'd be good enough in any case," answered the editor shaking the ashes off his pipe. "You've made yourself a name, and the public'll read any thing you write. Only, I'll tell you what, journalism's not the easy thing you may think."

Max Delormay confirmed this statement by ejaculating with feeling that he had often sat up a whole night elaborating notes which wouldn't be coaxed out of his head,—a reminiscence which evidently gave him a very sublime estimate of the difficulties of literature.

"Yes, but I didn't mean that," rejoined Nestor Roche mildly. "What I mean is, that there are two kinds of journalism,—one for which any man who can spell is fit enough; and the other, the real journalism, which sucks in its man like a whirlpool. Those among us who take a liking to our craft don't leave it. Our pens stick to our fingers, and there we sit scribbling until brain-fever grabs us, which it generally does, in the long run. I don't want to deter you from following your own bent; but I warn you of this, that, if you once take to printer's-ink, you'll soon be throwing off your gown. It's easier to write articles than to read up briefs and make speeches. It's pleasanter work, too; but, after a time, it squeezes your brain as flat as a sucked orange. Yes, I know what you were going to say," proceeded the editor, observing that Horace was preparing to reply. "You were going to cite half a dozen journalists who have been at work close upon fifty years, and who write leaders as much as ever. Yes, but just read those leaders. They are washed-out copies of others written long before you were born. The authors of them take it easy. They have given up fabricating new thoughts; they say the same things over and over again; they are like those looms that throw off, mechanically, a piece of cotton of the same length, breadth, color, and texture, every day. And mind, it needs a certain merit, in its way, to be able to do that. It requires a good thick, solid head that goes 'thud,' when you rap it, and doesn't contain two straws' worth of enthusiasm or conviction. Those men have no passion for their work. Their blood flows coolly and evenly through their veins, like the waters of the St. Martin's Canal.

Journalism, with them, is not a calling, it is a trade. They take to it in the same spirit as they would have taken to boot-making, had they been born a few steps lower down the ladder. But you, Horace Gerold, will never make one of this band. If I am any judge of your character, you will throw yourself into your work with all your might,—ambition, vanity, conviction, and talent, all pushing you together; and, so sure as ever you throw yourself into journalism, it will use you up, unless indeed," added the editor, rather gloomily, "unless it leads you to a prefecture or a seat in the cabinet; but I don't see much chance of that; for you are not of the stuff of which nature makes renegades, and I am not very sanguine as to our having a republic whilst you and I are on earth to enjoy it."

"Why not?" asked Max Delormay, astonished at this dispiriting prediction.

"Because we are a nation of parrots," Max," rejoined Nestor Roche, laying down his pipe.

It was not often that the editor indulged in such long speeches. He was habitually curt in his dialogues, and seldom went the length of developing his views. But his esteem for his old friend, Manuel Gerold, was so great, that he treated Horace and Emile to a share of it, and spoke more at length with them than he did with anybody, save his wife and his niece, who kept his house for him.

Horace answered, without much hesitation, "I never thought of taking to journalism as a profession. All I want is employment to keep me from rusting until I can go into court again."

"Dangerous," muttered the editor. "I took to journalism five and thirty years ago, waiting until I could pick up a practice as a doctor, and I have been at it ever since. But you shall have your way. The 'Sentinelle' is open to you. Write me leaders, or articles, or any thing else you like; only, in six months from this, I shall remind you of what you've just said, and expect you to drop the pen; for you can't drive two trades together."

A few minutes later Nestor Roche drew a pencil from his pocket, and said "Listen. this is just the position of the 'Sentinelle' at the present moment: We are selling 40,000 a day ever since the trial; at three sous a copy, that makes 5,600 francs a day; deduct 6 centimes per copy for the stamp-duty, and there remains 3,200 francs. Expenses of printing are 1,300 francs; publishing and remittances to agents, 800 francs; carriage, 400 francs. This leaves us 700 francs, to which we may add another 800 from advertisements. Out of this

1,500 you must subtract again 750 as payments to the staff, and the remaining 750 may be said to constitute the profits, which are supposed to be divided equally between my partner and me. To my partner, however, who is a money man, I pay over and above his share in the profits the sum of 5,000 francs a year, being the interest on the 50,000 francs he was obliged to deposit in the Treasury as caution-money when we started the paper; moreover, it is I who must meet such liabilities as may spring up in the way of fines and damages; for instance, the nine-and-thirty thousand francs of the other day. This statement will show you that the 'Sentinelle' is at present a paying concern; but you must remember, on the other hand, that the normal circulation is not 40,000, but 20,000, and that, as the 'Sentinelle' has already received two 'admonitions' from Government, it may, on its next offence, be suspended for two months, and after that be suppressed altogether, in which last event I am bound by treaty to pay my partner 100,000 francs. Do you follow?"

"Yes," answered Horace, a little surprised.

"Well, then," said the editor, shutting up his pencil-case and relapsing into briefness, "you won't make any mistake as to my reasons if I sometimes cut down your articles until there's nothing left of them but the paring. Supposing the 'Sentinelle' were suppressed I should be as good as ruined; but, what is infinitely more serious, there would be a Liberal organ the less in Paris: for, as you are aware, it needs a special license from Government to start a new paper, and that license the Government would refuse."

"Cut down my articles as much as you please," answered Horace, smiling. "You may be sure I shall respect your reasons."

Upon this understanding the young barrister temporarily joined the staff of the "Sentinelle," and wrote his first leader the same evening.

CHAPTER X.

NEW FRIENDS, NEW HABITS.

A BARRISTER may go into society or not as he pleases, and perhaps the less he goes the better for his professional work; but with a political journalist the case is just the opposite. Before long, Horace Gerold found himself thrown into daily intercourse with a number of personages

whom, hitherto, he had only considered from afar; eminent Liberals for the most part, and leaders of the party, whose organ the "Sentinelle" was. These gentlemen represented a considerable variety of shades in opinion, and, under a freer form of government, would have been pretty certain to detest one another cordially. But one of the beauties of despotism is that, like fox-hunting, "it brings parties together as wouldn't otherwise meet," and Legitimists, Orleanists, and Republicans formed in those days one happy family, coalesced in common hatred of the reigning dynasty.

As, owing to the law which prohibited the founding of political newspapers without special license from Government, the number of opposition prints was extremely limited, some honor attached to being on the staff of an independent journal. It was something like belonging to a crack club. All the members of the independent press hung very much together, maintaining a sort of freemasonry, and holding carefully aloof from the writers of the semi-official or Government press, whom they despised as little better than hired menials. Naturally, the Bonapartist writers resented this contempt, and affected to reciprocate it, and this kept up a feud which evinced itself in little things, such as frequenting different cafés, walking on opposite sides of the Boulevards, and adopting dissimilar slangs. In 1855, the favorite café of the opposition press was the Café des Variétés, that of Government journalists the Café des Princes on the other side of the way. It should be added that the face-to-face situation of these rival establishments not infrequently led to unpleasantnesses, such as meetings in the middle of the road between foes crossing from one pavement to the other; and so sure as ever this happened, there was either a treading on toes, or a jostling of elbows, or something to necessitate an exchange of cards, perhaps an exchange of slaps on the face, and on the morrow an encounter at daybreak. Those were times when MM. Grisiér and Pons, the fencing-masters, had a rare number of pupils in the literary profession. Horace was cordially received at the Café des Variétés the first time he appeared there at the "hour of absinthe," i.e., 5 P.M., on the arm of a M. Hector Tampon, sub-editor of the "Sentinelle." Preceded by his quickly-won reputation, he was hailed as a valuable recruit. Nobody asked whether he wrote well—that, in the opinion of journalists, was a secondary consideration—but he thought well: he seemed to hate the Government well, and that was enough.

M. de Tirecruchon, the stout editor of the "Gazette des Boulevards" whom he had

already seen once in the Correctional Court on the occasion of the Macrobe trial, held out his hand and shouted with a bluntness which at first surprised him: "Welcome, M. Gerold. You're quite right to try the press. I predict you'll make your way in it."

"Oh! I'm only a visitor," answered Horace modestly: "the 'Sentinelle' has taken me in like a passenger on a cruise."

"Tut, tut! When passengers like you come on board they don't go off again in a hurry. It's ten times pleasanter writing leading articles than cramming briefs, and so you'll find when you've had time to compare. If you leave the 'Sentinelle' give me the preference; my columns are open to you." M. de Tirecruchon here drew an immense flat cigar from a Russian-leather case, and wreathed his solid face in smoke. "I'm a Legitimist," he continued, "but it doesn't matter, for it's Liberty Hall in my paper; all my contributors are free to write as they please. Do you see that small man yonder, sucking iced-punch through a straw? he's my sub-editor, a Red Republican like yourself, opposed to luxuries, and all that sort of thing. Take a seat. I'm going to prison next week, at least, as soon as Number 9 at Ste. Pélagie is vacant. I was sentenced yesterday, but I like being always in my old quarters, so that when I heard Number 9 was tenanted — (I look upon Number 9 as almost mine, for I've been there five times, and always leave a carpet-bag and a few shirts there), — I asked the Public Prosecutor not to make out the commitment until it was vacant again. Very civil fellow, the Public Prosecutor. He'll do any thing for you if you treat him properly; I called on him in dress clothes and a white tie, and that touched him. I see you smoke cigarettes; they're too weak for me; try one of these *panatellas*. I suppose you've made it up by this time with Macrobe. Uncommonly clever fellow, and gives capital dinners at that new place of his in the Champs Elysées. His daughter's one of the prettiest girls I've ever seen. You let fly pretty hard at the *Crédit Parisien* the other day, but it's a splendid concern upon my word; and if you've any spare cash I advise you to invest in it. I've done so. Nominal value of shares 500 francs, issued at 860; they're selling now at 800, and rising steadily. That man Macrobe is a genius."

Thus M. de Tirecruchon. Horace had expected a little more austerity from men who gave themselves out as the defenders of public morals, the champions of right against might, the victims of oppression, &c.; but he soon discovered that liberal opinions and a good-natured tolerance of successful

capitalists go very well hand in hand. Even the Red Republican who was sucking iced-punch through a straw, admitted that there were few things like the shares of the *Crédit Parisien*, and that though he despised riches he had bought two dozen of them. Excessive strait-lacing was out of fashion at the *Café des Variétés*, and it was only in his own editor, Nestor Roche, whose rugged soul was all of a piece, that Horace found that uncompromising sternness of principle which he had been disposed to think was inseparable from republicanism.

It was his habit to go and call upon Nestor Roche every day with either a leader or some occasional notes; and these visits afforded him the opportunity of learning what a real talent there lies in careful editing. Nestor Roche was not a man of many words, and the few he uttered were apt to mislead those who would have taken them as an earnest of the man's secret thoughts. In conversation he seemed indifferent and sceptical; in reality he was imbued to the marrow with theories of his own, and cherished, with a child-like veneration, the political creed in which he had been educated. This became, to a certain extent, apparent when he corrected the articles of his younger contributors; for, without appearing to do it designedly, he would, by a word inserted or expunged here and there, alter the whole tone of passages which jarred on any of his favorite chords. Men seldom make very good journalists until thirty, and Horace's writings profited considerably by the searching discipline to which they were subjected. They left the editor's hands strengthened and furbished, and yet the corrections were so few, that the most susceptible of literary vanities would not have found a pretext for taking umbrage. Horace was often astonished at the fine figure his own articles cut in print, and even wondered slightly at his own talent. Amongst his brother journalists too, it soon came to be remarked that young Horace Gerold was an elegant and thoughtful writer. The truth was, he wrote neither better nor worse than most intelligent young men of four-and-twenty, and so the public would have judged had his compositions passed straight out of his own hands into those of the printer.

Invitations and civilities began to flow in apace. Society does not run after those who shun it, but it soon adopts those who make any advances. From mixing with journalists at the *café* and elsewhere, it was not long before Horace was solicited to dine with them at their homes and meet their wives or connections. Then came introductions to eminent statesmen who had held high office under former governments

and deemed it politic to surround themselves with the rising men of the press and the bar, with a view to a possible return to power in the future. There were also nobles of the Faubourg St. Germain, who, to cement the coalition of all parties against the Usurper, filled their drawing-rooms once or twice a month with human salads concocted of all the prominent elements then in Opposition.

Horace was everywhere received pretty much as a budding hero. His good looks, his literary and oratorical merits—(recommendations always powerful in France)—would alone have sufficed to open many doors to him; but the interest he inspired was heightened by the mystery in which he enshrouded his real name and distinguished birth. At the Café des Variétés few knew or cared whether he was a nobleman or not; but it was very different in society where there were ladies. A little to his vexation, although that vexation was not unmingled with a small dose of incipient complacency, Horace Gerold discovered that his titles were a secret for nobody, and that the fact of his repudiating them as he did was accounted to him for stoicism and abnegation beyond the common. In fact, he would never have suspected how hard it was not to wear one's coronet had not people marvelled more than once, when they thought him out of ear-shot, that any young man should prefer such a name as Gerold to that of Clairefontaine.

One evening after he had heard himself addressed as M. le Marquis five or six times by different persons in the course of an hour, he turned rather impatiently to the lady with whom he was conversing, and said, "Why do people insist upon labelling one with these absurd titles?"

This was at a rout given in the hospitable mansion of a very famous man—none other than the small and eloquent M. Tiré, who had been Prime Minister under Louis Philippe, and had helped not a little, by the way, in bringing the dynasty he loved to grief. The lady in conversation with Horace was an extremely pretty Baroness de Margauld, wife of an Orleanist banker.

"Why do you call titles absurd?" she replied. "I wear mine bravely enough, and should be sorry not to possess it."

"I don't mean that they are absurd for everybody," he answered blushing; "though even in your case, Madame, I might well say, of what use is a title to you? But it is absurd to inflict upon me a distinction which I do not choose to bear."

"You must blame your own friends for that," said the Baroness, with a little tinge of slyness. "If they will sound your trum-

pet so loudly, you must expect people to do you honor."

"What friends? what trumpet?" inquired Horace, with innocence.

"Oh! you have so many friends, M. Gerold; but to cite only one instance, there is M. Macrobe, who misses no occasion of praising your good qualities; he was talking to my husband, only this morning, of your high principles and your generosity."

"M. Macrobe my friend!" exclaimed Horace, sceptically; "why, he is the man against whom I pleaded the other day."

"I am certain he bears you no ill-will, then," rejoined the Baroness, "but why did you plead against him? Surely you do not believe all the wicked stories that have been circulated against him?"

"I neither believe, nor disbelieve," answered Horace, "but it seems to me that people judge M. Macrobe much more leniently than they would if he had failed in his curious speculations instead of enriching himself as he has done."

The Baroness gave a pretty little shrug.

"Is not success the best touchstone of merit? I believe, for my part, it is the touchstone of honesty, too."

"Of honesty!" echoed Horace with surprise.

"Yes, my confessor says so. He asserts that Heaven would not allow bad men to prosper, and that consequently when we see a man very wealthy and successful, we may be sure he has deserved his good fortune, however much his enemies may say to the contrary."

"Truly a convenient moralist," observed Horace, smiling; "a sort of man to consult when one's conscience is in trouble."

"Yes, he is indeed," answered the Baroness naively. "You should know him. His name is Father Glabre of the Society of Jesus."

"I guessed the Society of Jesus," responded Horace, "and I suppose Father Glabre exemplifies his principles by being a Bonapartist. He must regard the success of the *coup-d'état* as the divine consecration of Napoleon."

"Father Glabre never talks politics," answered M^{de} Margauld. "He says that one of the Apostles enjoined us to submit ourselves to the powers that be. And, after all, what does it matter who is King or Emperor?" added she fixing her bright eyes on the young man; "life was not given us to spend in wrangling as to who should sit in a velvet arm-chair. Why cannot we put up with the government we have, and try and make the best of it, it would be so much pleasanter."

Horace had too much tact to wag a war of opinions with a lady, but he said gayly,

"All I wonder at, Madame, is that, holding these views, you should risk facing such a sturdy anti-imperialist as our host."

"Oh! I come here because of the nice people one meets," answered the baroness, playing with her fan. "If one desires to see men of any real worth in art, or literature, or politics, one must look for them in Opposition drawing-rooms. It has been the great mistake of the Emperor that instead of calling to him all the men who had rendered themselves illustrious under past reigns, he has made himself a court with a crowd of persons whom nobody knows. It's a pity, for I adore talent, and think that a sovereign cannot have too many distinguished men about him."

"I daresay he had no choice," muttered Horace a little dryly. "Doubtless he would have been glad enough to fill his court with distinguished men, if distinguished men had consented to be employed for that purpose."

"Then you believe it is the men of talent who are holding aloof from him."

"Why, assuredly, Madame; have we not the proof in M. Tiré himself?"

"How good it is to be young and to have all one's illusions," murmured she, with arch but not unsympathizing railery at the young man. "Do you see, M. Gerold, that what has so angered all our great friends is, that they have been played? Their vanity is stung. They deemed it impossible that a stable government could ever be established without their help, and the way in which the Emperor has dispensed with their assistance, has been like telling them of what small account they were in the land. Our host, M. Tiré, is a charming man, but as vain as they say we women are. He thought himself necessary, and the Emperor has obliged him to drink gall. Depend upon it, if he were offered place to-morrow, he would accept, and with alacrity. He would consider such an offer an avowal of weakness; it would soothe his ruffled self-love; and self-love always goes before principle."

"You take a dark view of human nature," said Horace, rather moodily.

"I take the same view of it as you will when you have been ten years in society like me," replied Madame de Margauld with half a sigh. "You are a rising man, M. Gerold. If you aspire to lead your contemporaries you must not estimate them above their worth."

The same night, going home, Horace revolved these last words in his mind with a dawning and discomfiting conviction, that a society which condoned the shortcomings of such people as M. Macrobe, for the sake of the gold they possessed, did not deserve

to be esteemed very highly. Somehow, though, he felt that his own contempt for the capitalist was lessening. Suspect and dislike a man as we will, we can seldom be totally indifferent to his repaying our ill-feelings by going about and speaking well of us.

It was long past midnight when Horace reached his lodging, and he walked quietly in on tiptoe for fear of awaking his brother. Something like a pang went through his heart on thinking of Emile. The two brothers were seeing less and less of each other every day. Since Horace had taken to journalism, their ways lay apart. They no longer breakfasted and dined together at the modest *table-d'hôte*. Horace frequented the restaurants of the Boulevards, Montmartre, and Des Italiens; he rarely got up before ten in the morning; spent his evenings either out at parties or at the theatre, and when he returned home towards the small hours, usually found Emile in bed. On this occasion, however, the younger brother was still up, at his desk, writing.

Horace crept in softly behind him and put an arm round his neck: "Working so late, old fellow?" he said kindly.

"Yes, Horace," answered Emile, squeezing his hand. He pointed to two or three parcels of papers tied with pink tape, and added, "I have been intrusted with a brief that requires some study."

This was putting the case very mildly, for ever since that *début*, in which he had disappointed the hopes of the unprofessional public, but won golden opinions from the solicitors, Emile had been intrusted with several briefs, all most arid, voluminous, and tough. Solicitors were delighted to find a young man who was devoid of vanity, and had no ambition to make himself a name at the expense of his clients. Briefs were offered him which were not important enough for the stars of the profession, but which demanded an immense amount of reading, and required to be handled by a man of talent, content to work hard with small prospect of glory, and, often, for not very high remuneration. Barristers of this kidney are scarce in all lands, but in France, perhaps, more so than elsewhere. Whence it happened that Emile was getting as much employment as he could manage.

He was looking pale however, so that, after they had talked a little while together, Horace prevailed upon him to go to bed. They wished each other affectionately good-night; but before retiring to his own room, Horace passed into his study to see if there were any letters. There were several, chiefly invitations, and in the midst of the heap, a little packet fastened with blue ribbons.

"From whom does this come?" said he, returning to his brother's room with the parcel opened, and displaying a dozen cambric bands and as many pocket-handkerchiefs, exquisitely embroidered with his initials.

"Oh! I forgot to tell you," exclaimed Emile, already in bed, and raising himself on his elbow; "they were brought up to-day by our landlord's daughter, in return for a work-box which she says you gave her."

"Kind little Georgette!" ejaculated Horace.

"She seems an amiable girl," continued Emile; "but I met her father to-day in the street, and he tells me that she is growing serious and silent, and doesn't look well."

CHAPTER XL

LOVE AND WAR.

No, Georgette had not been well lately, and the excellent M. Pochemolle, his wife, and even M. Alcibiade Pochemolle, had been growing a little uneasy at seeing that the blooming young girl, once so gladsome, had become by degrees unaccountably subdued and pensive. They questioned her as to whether she felt unwell, but she replied that she had no consciousness of being otherwise than usual—that there was nothing the matter.

And yet matter there was, though probably Georgette was sincere enough in asserting that she was not conscious of it. Several weeks had elapsed since the present of the work-box by Horace Gerold. She had hemmed him the cambric bands; then, fearing that the gift would not be complete, she had wished to add a dozen handkerchiefs, and this had taken time—it takes time to work twelve times over the letters H. G., when there are so many pauses for reverie between the stitches. And during the weeks that she had slowly plied her needle in marking the cambric with the two initials, she had seen Horace pass the window every morning and lift his hat and smile to her as he went on his way to the newspaper-office; and she had heard of his having entered journalism and of his new triumphs in that profession. Out of compliment to his lodger, and although he indignantly repudiated the doctrines advocated in that print, M. Pochemolle had made it a point to subscribe to the "*Sentinel*," and in the evening, when she retired to her room, Georgette took the paper with her and would sit up in her bed reading the articles by Horace. She did

not always understand them at first, but she would read them over and over until she did; and if she was not successful after many readings, then she would read the signature a multitude of times, and that pleased her: she fancied, somehow, the letters were in his own handwriting. When she had read the papers she put them all carefully by in a drawer. M. Alcibiade Pochemolle sometimes wondered what became of them.

She no longer carried up their letters to the brothers when they were brought to the wrong door. There is an instinct in these things. But she would gaze with curious scrutiny at the envelopes directed in feminine hands. When there were none such she was happier.

She had noticed, with the quick eye of a woman for such trifles, that Horace Gerold was turning fashionable. He had an eyeglass, wore light-colored gloves and lacquered boots, smoked cigars instead of the cigarettes which he used to twirl himself, and always came home at night in cabs. She could hear the vehicles stop in the street outside, and then his step as he mounted the staircase. She never went to sleep until she heard that step—not if it were delayed till four o'clock in the morning. One day, Horace had come into the shop and brought them a private box for the opera—she had once remarked in his presence that she loved music. The performance was *Robert le Diable*. Nothing could have been more hospitable or more full of tact than the arrangements made by him for their comfort. He had chartered a private brougham to convey and bring them back; and in the second entr'acte had paid them a visit in their box, bringing two bouquets, one for herself and one for her mother, and a fine *cornet* of bonbons, without which the happiness of a Parisian *bourgeoise* at the "playhouse" is never complete. Upon the drawing up of the curtain he had discreetly taken his leave. It had been a great evening for everybody. M. Alcibiade Pochemolle had never put on so much bear's-grace in the course of his existence, and the sight of the *corps-de-ballet* made his fingers tingle; M. Pochemolle had reckoned that there were at least a hundred square yards of canvas in the drop-scene; Madame Pochemolle had been much impressed by the resurrection of the ghost-nuns in the church-yard scene. As for Georgette, she had remarked but one thing, and that was, that Horace on returning to his stall had bowed to several stately and beautiful ladies in the boxes, and that at the close of the third act he had appeared in the box of one covered with diamonds, whom M. Pochemolle had recognized for a Marchioness of

the noble Faubourg. Alone in her room after the opera, and with her bouquet in her hand, the poor child shivered mournfully. Who was she that she could hope to vie with ladies who wore diamonds and were Marchionesses? It was evident M. Gerold had never given her a thought.

Nevertheless, she had moments of flitting compensation; and her cheeks mantled on the morrow of the day when Horace had found her present on his table and came down to thank her with his bright voice, which seemed to her more refined and gentle each time she heard it. He drew out one of the handkerchiefs, which was lightly scented with mignonette, admired the embroidery of the initials—indeed no common piece of workmanship—and playfully observed he intended keeping this fine linen for great occasions: "My wedding-day, for instance," said he, "providing I ever do marry." And at these words she turned pale anew; it was like a cloud passing rapidly over a furtive sunbeam.

The probabilities are that Horace did not remark this pallor, though he could not help noticing in a general way that she was changed since he had spoken with her last. He told her how sorry he was to hear she had been unwell, and drew forth the rather faltering answer that, indeed, she felt in perfect health.

This time he was struck with the tone of the reply, and it recurred to him at intervals in the course of the day, and again once or twice during the week when passing by the shop he remarked that George's eyes lowered under his with a new expression which he did not understand. Then this circumstance faded out of his mind under the pressure of graver pre-occupations which soon beset him.

He underwent the common lot of Parisian journalists, and got engaged in a quarrel with a brother penman in the opposite camp. The fault was not his, nor altogether his adversary's, but that of the admirable political system under which they both lived. The conditions of the French Press were then such that journalists could not well help coming to loggerheads, try as they might. The unlucky law Tinguy-Laboulie (named after the two old gentlemen who promoted it), which rendered it binding upon the writer of an article to sign his name to it, had completely disorganized the old anonymous Press by substituting individualism for combined action, and conflict of personalities for polemic of opinions. The staff of a newspaper was no longer a disciplined company, but a band of sharpshooters, each of the members of which, being personally responsible for the opinions he emitted, naturally did

his utmost to assert himself. Had the Press been free, the discussions between man and man need not necessarily have degenerated into violence, for it is not the tendency of educated men to abuse one another when they have fair arguments at their command. But, hemmed in as journalists were on every side by penal clauses, which made it impossible to write on any subject with latitude, the temptation to glide from trammelled controversy into exchange of personal invectives was often irresistible. Opposition writers would break out into vituperation, as a train will jump off the line because obstacles are set in the way of its straight course; but more frequently the aggressors were the members of the semi-official Press. These gentlemen, being obliged to defend the acts of their Government, by hook or by crook, might have found the task an up-hill one had the only weapons allowed them been those of logic; but matters were much simplified when they could champion Imperial policy with a pen in one hand and a foil in the other. If the pen found nothing to say, the foil came to the rescue, and it was not an unusual thing to attempt silencing troublesome writers in the liberal ranks by picking a series of bones with them, until they either held their peace, overawed, or retaliated by spitting a few of their antagonists one after the other. This was what was tried with Horace.

There was an Imperialist paper named "Le Pavois," and on the staff of it one M. Paul de Cosaque, a Creole, with a frizzly head of hair, large round eyes, and hands like small shoulders of mutton. This promising youth, though not above five and twenty, was the Quixote of his party, serving the dynasty in a devoted Creole way, and hating oppositionists as a tough young bull-dog might vermin. He was not long in taking offence at the successes of Horace. Hearing his name so constantly mentioned, he ended by growing tired of it, and did not conceal his longing for an opportunity of coming into collision with one whose popularity he was pleased to regard as in some sort a personal affront to himself. So he proceeded to do what is called in journalistic phrase "laying a man on a gridiron," which means that he collared Horace Gerold and served him up every day to the readers of the "Pavois," skewered through and through with an epigram. They were somewhat blunt, these epigrams of M. Paul de Cosaque, but the intention of them was plain enough, and, at the outset, Horace was for despatching a couple of seconds to request that satisfaction might be afforded him. But, with a shrug, Nestor Roche pooh-poohed this notion, saying it were

best to take no heed of the barking of a cur; so that M. Paul, perceiving a reluctance to quarrel, set down his adversary for a chicken-heart, and began unwisely to crow cock-a-whoop before the time.

Now one day, after this fleabiting had been going on for some weeks, Horace wrote a leader in the "Sentinelle" on the subject of the privacy of the parliamentary debates. It was a very temperate article, though not without a dash of acid, and it had been ably revised by Nestor Roche, who had given it the backbone it at first wanted. Several foreign papers, and most of the liberal provincial organs, quoted it; and as the law which debarred the public from knowing what went on in their own Parliament was an ever-chafing sore, the author received a good many congratulations from Boulevard politicians. This was just the sort of occasion M. Paul de Cosaque had been looking for. He was down on the article in a trice, dipping his pen in his smartest verjuice, and howling out abuse much as a faithful negro might do who had seen his master's shins scraped. Horace was on a visit to his editor at the prison of Ste. Pélagie when the number of the "Pavois" containing M. Paul's attack fell into his hands. Nestor Roche, Max Delormay, and another captured journalist named Jean Kerjou of the "Gazette des Boulevards," were sitting at the table writing. The printer's devil, Trigger, who had just brought all the morning papers in a vast bundle under his arm, was planted on a chair, whence his legs dangled, and his one eye squinted, waiting for "copy." Horace himself was lounging on the ottoman and smoking as he read.

He started up with the color rising to his face and an indignant glare in his eyes.

"Look at this, M. Roche," he said, and began to stride about the room, biting his lips. "It is time this should end now. I shall send the fellow my seconds this afternoon."

"No; wait till to-morrow," put in Jean Kerjou. "I shall be out of prison then, and I'll act for you. Who is the man?"

Nestor Roche ran his quick glance through the column and presently answered: "Well, my boy, it's one of the necessities of our trade to fight as well as scribble. This whelp's trying to draw you; you must break his teeth. But, first, we'll just give him a rap with his own weapons and make his copper-colored knuckles ring."

The four journalists were soon in consultation round the board with the open number of the "Pavois" before them. What they wanted was to draw up a retort which should strike at the weak place in M. Paul's armor, and make that sword-clinker yell.

This weak place was not difficult to find. M. Paul, like many other worthy people, was not above the foible of vanity, and had tacked on to his patronymic a name which did not lawfully belong to him. His real style and title was Paul Panier; but Panier being an ugly name, signifying "basket," he, or rather he and his father between them, had discarded it in favor of the more sounding designation De Cosaque, which was derived from the country residence of the elder Panier. But these usurpations are formally prohibited by law under pain of imprisonment; and it was, therefore, very much like throwing projectiles out of a glass-house when M. Paul delivered himself as follows, in his attack upon Horace:—

.... "As for these so-called Republicans, who go about under false names, being ashamed to wear the titles which their fathers bore, lest they should compromise their popularity with the rabble; as for these self-styled Democrats, who refuse homage to a king, but fawn sycophantly upon the mob, and see no better way of currying favor with their masters than by making litter of all the distinctions their own ancestors won, just like those low birds who befoul their own nests;—as for these men, we know what is their object in asking that the debates of the Chamber may again be thrown open to public audiences. They have not forgotten 1793, when the galleries were filled with drunken trollops, whose blood-thirsty howls gave our precious Republicans the courage they needed to send old men, women, and fallen kings to the scaffold; nor 1848, when the scum of our galleys infested the Strangers' tribunes to cheer the dismal buffooneries of such men as the citizen Manuel Gerold. We should not wonder if those who ask that the tribunes may be thrown open again, had an eye to some day becoming deputies themselves; but, being aware of the contempt with which their utterances would be received by men of sense, they wish to make sure of having an audience of kindred spirits—like those tenth-rate actors who, unable to excite applause in the stalls and boxes, pick some poor devils out of the gutter and hire them for five sous a night to go and clap their hands in the pit."

There was nothing uncommon in the form of this effusion; it was the true semi-official style of the period.

Nestor Roche prepared the following reply, which Horace signed:—

"*The MARQUIS OF CLAIREFONTAINE to
M. PAUL PANIER.*"

"The gentleman on the staff of the 'Pavois' who calls himself M. 'de Cosaque,'

is respectfully informed that the undersigned writer will resume the title he inherited from his ancestors on the day his courteous antagonist does likewise. M. Paul 'de Cosaque' will doubtless see fit to perform this resumption without delay, lest the Public Prosecutor, forgetting that M. 'de Cosaque' is a Bonapartist, and remembering only that he is a transgressor of the law, which forbids persons to adopt nobiliary particles to which they have no right, should order his transfer to Mazas, and so afford him the opportunity of making a closer acquaintance with those 'scum of the galleys,' with whose language, as well as with whose habits, M. 'de Cosaque' appears so conversant.

"HORACE GEROLD."

This again was a very fair specimen of an Opposition retort.

"This will save you the trouble of sending a challenge," remarked the editor. "The whelp will probably begin operations himself;" and he handed the slip to Trigger, who, after receiving his usual instruction not to loiter with fellow *gamins*, shambled off with it to the printing-office.

The effect, however, was not quite what Nestor Roche and his acolytes expected. On reading the stinging paragraph M. Paul de Cosaque blanched, but he did not set out in quest of seconds. He caught up his hat and went off prowling in the direction of the Boulevards, grinding his white creole teeth, and clinching his fists so tight that the nails left four dents in each of the brown palms. He wanted to find Horace and knock him down; then fight him with steel afterwards. There is no profession like literature for making a man mild and brotherly.

Horace was breakfasting at one of the great restaurants, and with him, as it chanced, was Jean Kerjou, the man of the "Gazette des Boulevards," who had been released from confinement in the morning. He was a Breton, this journalist, short, but thick and powerful, and amazingly prompt with his hands, like all Bretons. He had taken a fancy to Horace, who knew but little of him, and the pair were, so to say, watering their new-sprung friendship in this breakfast.

Suddenly Jean Kerjou, who sat opposite the door, dissecting a woodcock, abandoned his bird, crying, "Haro, Gerold, look out!" and sprang to his legs. The mulatto face of M. Paul was darkening the doorway, and in less than two seconds was within blow-reach of them.

M. Paul held a newspaper crunched up in his right hand. He strode up to the table, jabbered something unintelligible,

and, before any one in the crowded restaurant could stop him, delivered a tremendous cuff, which missed Horace's head by an ace, alighted, with a loud thwack, on the countenance of a waiter, and sent him sprawling on to a table where lunched a peaceful English family, who set up piercing cries.

There was an inconceivable uproar, amidst which a huge slap resounded, and simultaneously an unholy crash of broken glass, as some one not distinguishable was hurled, all of a lump, into a corner. The slap was administered by Horace: the crash was caused by Jean Kerjou, who had caught up M. Paul like a bundle of linen, and shot him to the other end of the room.

Twenty arms at once pinned down the creole, gnashing and struggling to rise; twenty others pulled back Horace Gerold and Jean Kerjou, to prevent further mischief. Then uprose a deafening contestation as to who was the aggressor—the English family shrieking all together that it was the negro, and the waiter thundering that it was Horace, seeing that, had the blow fallen on his cheek as it was meant to do, half the disturbance would have been avoided. In the midst of the hubbub entered two policemen, who took down the names of everybody all round, apprehended the waiter on the ground that, being splashed all over with lobster-sauce, he was presumably the culprit; and, on being eventually induced to release him, retired bewildered, leaving the field clear to a gentleman with a countenance like a weasel's, who, having been witness of the whole scene, stepped forward, with his mouth full, and sputtered, "I maintain, it's an act of the most brutal aggression. M. Paul de Cosaque, you've conducted yourself like a villain. Do you hear that?"

There was no mistaking this twanging voice. It was M. Macrobe's. He had been lunching with a stock-broking friend, and this friend, fearful that he would get himself into trouble, now sought to restrain him by the coat-tails; but M. Macrobe would not be restrained. He rushed up to the infuriated creole, who was with difficulty kept from flying at his throat, and shouted, "Men like yourself are a disgrace to the Press, M. Panier. You convert what should be the noblest of professions into a bravo's trade. You deserve to be stamped out like a pestilent toad, and if M. Gerold doesn't kill you, I will."

M. Paul de Cosaque was forcibly dragged out of the restaurant. M. Macrobe turned, apparently trembling with the holiest indignation and sympathy, and walked to where Horace and his friend were standing.

The least Horace Gerold could do for a man who had taken his part so warmly was to thank him, which he did at once and with gratitude, though coldly. M. Macrobe, not minding the coldness, continued to strike whilst the iron was hot.

"My dear young friend," said he, "that man is a very cut-throat. He has had half a dozen men out already, and will nip your brilliant career short if we let him; but trust to me: I will be your second. It was he who first raised his hand on you. This makes you the offended party, and gives you choice of weapons."

Horace did not much relish the proposal of M. Macrobe to be his second; but to refuse would, under the circumstances, have been both discourteous and ungracious. Besides, Jean Kerjou did not leave him time to do so, for, delighted with the pluck of "the small man with the ferret face," he held out his hand, and said, "Sir, my name is Jean Kerjou, and I am M. Gerold's other second. Between us we will see our friend well through this scrape."

Further breakfast being impossible, Horace threw down five napoleons to the landlord to pay for the breakages, and two more to the waiter to soothe his throbbing jaw. Then he, Jean Kerjou, and the banker, slipped out by a back door to escape the mob, which had already congregated outside, wide-mouthed, and so home to Horace's lodgings. The two policemen, before retiring, had suggested that everybody should call upon the Commissary of Police during the afternoon to explain matters; but this formality was omitted, for the police official could neither have undone that which was accomplished, nor prevented that which was to come. In the course of a couple of hours Jean Kerjou and M. Macrobe had routed out Emile from a musty court, in which he was acting as junior in a fearfully musty case, and hastily apprised him of what had happened: after which they had called upon M. de Cosaque, and arranged a rendezvous with the latter's two friends at five. By dinner-time the duel was all settled. It was to come off at seven the next morning, in the Bois de Vincennes, with foils.

Of course the news spread quickly along the Boulevards, and was received with no inconsiderable glee by the do-nothing portion of the public. These tiffs between journalists were the one thing that saved the press of the period from monotony, and a duel was always a welcome little episode. All the evening papers gave accounts of the fracas at the restaurant; but, in order not to spoil sport, i.e., bring the police on the ground, they fraternally abstained from divulging the spot where the fight

was to take place. Nevertheless, they printed the names of the contending parties in full, with those of their seconds, and hinted significantly that M. Paul de Cosaque was one of the best swordsmen in Paris.

By the advice of his two friends, who took bodily charge of him during the evening, Horace dined lightly, and gave an hour to fencing, in which he was already tolerably proficient. At half-past nine he was escorted to his door, with injunctions to go to bed as soon as possible, and be up by six the next day.

The day might be called an eventful one, but he mounted his staircase with a very quiet pulse for a man who was going to risk his life at sunrise.

Just as he reached the *entresol*, however, a door was timidly held ajar, and he was confronted by Georgette.

She had read of the impending duel in the newspaper, and ever since her mind had been distracted by visions of blood and death. She was pale and terrified, and held the newspaper in her hands. When she saw Horace she said nothing, but shed a few tears.

He was touched by this unexpected meeting, and by the simple display of grief, of which he could not but guess the cause.

"Why are you crying, Mademoiselle Georgette?" he said, gently.

She made no answer, but pointed to the paragraph in the newspaper.

He took one of her unresisting hands in his, and said with gayety, "But there is nothing to be afraid of in that. Duels happen every day."

"You may be killed," she sobbed.

"And if I were, would you grieve for me?" he asked, half in jest, half gravely.

She threw him a sad, reproachful look.

"Don't speak like that, Monsieur Horace; you know how unhappy I — how unhappy we should all be," added she, correcting herself.

He took her other hand, looked into her eyes, and said, "I shall run no danger Georgette."

This was the first time he called her Georgette. She strove gently to free herself: but the effort was short-lived.

"Promise me you won't fight to-morrow," she faltered.

"I promise you he shall not hurt me, Georgette," he answered, encircling her waist with his arm.

"Oh, but if he should" — she said, making another feeble attempt to disengage herself.

"But he won't, Georgette."

And, stooping, he pressed a kiss on her lips.

But theirs was the bliss of a few instants only, for at that moment the house-door opened, then closed, and the steps of a lodger in the vestibule below warned them to separate.

"Good-night, Georgette," he whispered. "I shall be safe to-morrow if you return me my kiss. It will be my talisman."

He was still holding her waist. She blushed; looked over the balusters to see if the lodger was coming, and then returned him his kiss.

The next morning betimes, one of the keepers of the Bois de Vincennes, returning to his cottage from night-duty, beheld two broughams, following each other at an interval of a few minutes, sweep along the road to the race-course, and stop near a secluded knoll, distant some couple of hundred yards from the Grand Stand; and, being a man of experience, he knew what that meant. Chancing to be further a shrewd man, he resolved upon retracing his steps, and, instead of going home, to take up his position at a distance, though within eye-view, so as to be ready to come forward when every thing was over and earn an honest twenty-franc piece, by undertaking to preserve secrecy. To these ends he ensconced himself behind the trunks of some felled trees. M. Macrobe, who had managed matters for Horace, had done every thing very well. He had brought his brougham, with store of lint, bandages, restoratives, &c., concealed in the pocket; the most eminent surgeon in Paris on one of the front seats; and a pair of the finest duelling-foils in a chamois bag. He had quite won the graces of Jean Kerjou, both by his energy, his practical hints, and the loud-spoken sympathy he evinced for Horace. In sooth, M. Macrobe had been somewhat gloomy the preceding afternoon, on his principal insisting upon fighting with foils; and his gloom had not cleared up until he had seen how Horace bore himself in the fencing-school. Horace, though he never boasted of it, and never sought to air his talent, was a good fencer; having been originally taught by his father, who, first as a nobleman, then as an officer, and finally as a journalist, had served a treble apprenticeship in sword-craft. M. Macrobe was elated to see the manner in which he could parry and lunge, and though he would still have preferred pistols, on the ground that a man with steady nerves can blow his adversary out of life with this weapon, and not allow time to be shot at in return, yet he felt considerably re-assured as to his principal's prospects even against such an antagonist as M. de Cosaque.

Horace Gerold's party were the first on the ground. Upon the others appearing, the eight gentlemen all bowed together, but there were no negotiations attempted—the insults exchanged being such as could only be washed out by blood-shed. The two seconds of M. de Cosaque—one a colonel of the Imperial Guard and a man of the *coup-d'état*, the other, M. de Gargousse, an official deputy—selected the ground along with M. M. Macrobe and Kerjou, and then examined the different pairs of foils that had been brought. By common consent those of M. Macrobe were chosen; they were very ribbons of steel, that could be bent so that the point touched the handle without snapping. Whilst these preliminaries were being adjusted, the two principals took off their coats, waistcoats, hats, cravats, and boots—so as not to slip on the wet morning grass;—and opened their shirts a little, as etiquette required, to show that they wore no mail-coat next the skin. Meantime, the two surgeons, standing aside and conversing in a low voice, fumbled in their pockets to open their surgical cases, in order that no time might be lost when their cheerful services were needed. The morning was deliciously balmy; and in the wood could be heard the tinkling of a cart-bell, and the lively voice of the carter speaking to his horse as they jogged together to their work. It is only human beings who could think of fighting on such a morning as that.

There was a silence. The combatants were face to face, two yards apart. The Colonel having measured the foils, gave one to each, then joined the two weapons by the points, and, stepping back with head uncovered, said, "Allez, Messieurs." Then the guard ensconced behind the fallen trees saw this:—

The strongest of the two duellists, he with the dark face and large hands, bore down upon his adversary with a terrific onslaught, forcing him to "break" and parry wildly; then, when it seemed as though the quickness of the retreat must cause the slighter combatant to lose his balance, the other made a rapid, furious lunge. The attack was so formidable that any but a first-rate fencer would have been carried off his legs by it. The guard—an old soldier—wincing. But the slighter man rallied with desperate strength, struck up the sword that was within a hair's breadth of his heart, plunged forward, and with the suddenness of lightning thrust his foil through his adversary's chest, up to the hilt. The whole thing did not last fifty seconds. M. Paul de Cosaque rolled over on the grass, with the foil still in him, quite dead.

Four out of the seven spectators turned

pale. The Colonel glanced at Horace, and saluted him with respect. M. Macrobe pressed up and wrung his hand. The guard loomed from behind his trees and came up slowly, in pursuit of his twenty francs.

CHAPTER XII.

M. MACROBE OFFERS MONEY.

THE lucky hazard that had thrown M. Macrobe in the way of Horace at the restaurant, had gratified one of that sagacious financier's most deep-rooted wishes. A few days before, talking with M. Louchard, the Commissary of Police, with whom, as with a good many strange persons, he was on affable terms, the latter had said to him: "By the way, M. Macrobe, do you know that the young radical who spoke against you in the libel-suit, is by birth a marquis, and owns vast wealth?"

"Yes, I know it," responded M. Macrobe curiously; "but how did you know it?"

"Why, after the trial, seeing that the popularity of this young man threatened to become a danger to public order, the Prefect sent me to search his apartments." Here M. Louchard lowered his voice, for they were in a public place, and gave an account of his domiciliary visit to the brothers' lodgings, omitting that episode, however, which related to the threat of Horace to break his head. "And, odd to say," he concluded, "we found a deed by which the old Republican, Manuel Gerold, makes over to his two sons the whole of the estates of Hautbourg during his own lifetime."

M. Macrobe pricked up his ears.

"Have you that deed still in your possession, M. Louchard?"

"Why, yes," answered the commissary, glad to interest the powerful financier. "I took it to the Prefect, who read it, but ordered me to return it, the document being a family paper of no use to us. I should have done so ere now, but forgot. However, this deed has not been so useless as M. le Prefect pretends: for it has proved to us that these two young Gerolds are an extremely suspicious pair. Having wealth, they yet live as if they had nothing, which is evidence enough that they must lay out their money to unlawful ends. We suspect they are subsidizing secret societies, and we have got them under close supervision.

"Oh! they are under police surveillance?"

"The very closest. We have men watch-

ing them day and night. There is not a thing they do but we know of it."

"Yet, I'll be bound you don't know *who* they bank with, though this piece of knowledge might have stood you in better stead than many others which I dare say you have picked up." And M. Macrobe looked rather sarcastically at the man of Police.

"No, we've not found out who they bank with," answered M. Louchard reflectively. "And I suppose you can't tell us."

"They bank with us," replied M. Macrobe carelessly; "but I can't tell you any thing as to where their money goes. The revenue of the estates is paid into our hands every quarter-day by the agent; but it is drawn out again almost as soon by this same agent with cheques signed by old M. Gerold. That's all we know about it." Then turning pensive, he added, "You will show me that deed, M. Louchard."

"Willingly," rejoined the other, who counted that his civility would be repaid by financial hints; since none knew better than M. Macrobe how to give hints as to securities worth dabbling in, and shares which, though prosperous in aspect, had best be avoided. Everybody gambled on the Bourse in those days of jobbing, and M. Louchard did like the rest. But it was not every one who had such a master tipster as M. Macrobe to guide him.

The two went together to M. Louchard's office, and the banker had a sight of the deed of gift, which he scrutinized long and narrowly. In return for the favor he thus advised M. Louchard:—"The shares of the *Crédit Parisien* are quoted to-day at 850. I'll let you have twenty of them at 800. You shall pay me in a month. Hold fast to them till they're quoted at 1,500, which they will be in less than a couple of years, and then sell out." M. Louchard almost went down on all fours, thanking him with transports as a benefactor.

The deed of gift set M. Macrobe thinking. He was an astute man, and soon put his thoughts into plain figures. So long as he had imagined that Horace Gerold would have to await his father's death before stepping into the Hautbourg estate, he had treated the angling of him as a thing that could be undertaken leisurely; but now that Horace was actually master of his property, he was a fish to bait and hook with the least delay possible. M. Macrobe had reached that pitch of wealth, where gold comes flowing in like a Pactolus on the immutable principle by which rivers always roll their waters towards the sea, which has enough without them. But his were paper riches. They were the riches that give a man consideration on 'Change, make his name

familiar among brokers, and cause the outside public to speak of him as a warm man. M. Macrobe, however, desired something more than this. With opulence had come the ambition which opulence begets. The enriched stockjobber longed to be somebody, and the surest way to become somebody is to be at the head of an ancient name and a substantial landed estate — neither of which essentials M. Macrobe possessed. Under the circumstances, it was not very surprising that a man, accustomed like him to put things in black and white, should think of his daughter, and propose making her minister to his honest ambition. If she should marry a nobleman with influence at his command, that influence would naturally be at the service of her father, and give him a lift into that political world, where M. Macrobe now longed to try his powers. He turned over this thought maturely and in an infinite variety of lights, but always with the same result, to wit, that Horace Gerold and his daughter Angélique were evidently made for one another.

With M. Macrobe to plan was to resolve. Obstacles did not daunt him. He had surmounted so many already to make himself what he was, that the aversion which the two Gerolds testified towards him struck him as a mere vexatious circumstance — nothing more. That he should finally overcome the ill-feeling, he did not for a moment doubt; and he set himself to the concoction of sundry diplomatic schemes, by which he and Horace were to be brought together. But the merit of these schemes he never had the need to test, for as we have seen, hazard suddenly played his cards for him, and did more in a day than he, by his wits unaided, could have done in a twelve-month.

After the duel Horace was bound to him by one of those ties which men of honor regard as strong. He had espoused the young man's quarrel openly and fearlessly in public, thus risking his life for him — there being no question that, had M. Paul de Cosaque triumphed, he would have visited M. Macrobe's interference in such a way as to lay that gentleman and his schemes of glory six good feet under ground. Horace might regret not having acted with more caution in accepting M. Macrobe's friendly offices; but it was too late for repentance now. He was under an obligation to the financier, and the latter determined, by a skilful stroke, to put all that remained of his antipathy to flight.

It had been somewhat of a shock to Nestor Roche, when he heard that his young ally had gone out to fight, with the slippery stock-jobber for his second; and though, upon Horace rushing into the

prison-room a couple of hours after the duel, the joy at beholding him safe was such as, for the moment, to dispel all other pre-occupations, yet by and by, when the old editor had had time to grow calm and gruff again, he said, with a shade of pain, "I could have wished to see you with a worthier henchman on the field, my boy."

"I could have wished to have had you," replied Horace, gravely; "but I owe a debt to M. Macrobe."

And he proceeded to relate what had occurred, being backed in his narrative by Jean Kerjou, who spoke of the financier as having behaved throughout "like a trump." This did not convert Nestor Roche, but it appeased him, though soon his brow grew dark again, when Horace said, a little timidly, "And, do you know, I have a message from this very M. Macrobe to you, M. Roche?"

"To me!" exclaimed the editor, impatiently.

"Well, yes. This morning, after the duel, M. Kerjou, here present, and I breakfasted with him, and he fell to talking about the libel-trial. He was very frank, but full of tact about it. He said we must not bear him a grudge for having defended his good name, but that he sought to make no profit out of the action, and that he hoped you would take back the five and twenty thousand francs damages the court had made you pay."

Here Horace drew out a pocket-book.

Nestor Roche frowned.

"You needn't offer me that man's money. If he is lucky enough to persuade you that he is an injured man, I have nothing to say; but you know my opinion of him. I've not changed it."

"Yet it seems to me this should induce us to mitigate our judgment," observed Horace, sticking up for the man who had stood by him. "After all, I daresay he's no worse than thousands of others we call honest men; and here he has sent you back your twenty-five thousand francs, which is a great deal more than many others would have done."

Nestor Roche eyed him rather compassionately, and answered with dryness: —

"My boy, men will always get the weather-side of you with smooth tongues. Think well of this stock-jobber if you like, but take him back his money."

And he would not hear a word more on the subject.

Horace felt hurt at this shortness, and so did Jean Kerjou a little, for it did not suit this straightforward Breton to suppose that he had been shaking hands with a man who had any taint on him. He said so frankly, and was putting it with some

earnestness to Nestor Roche whether the latter had any thing definite to allege against the banker Macrobe, when Max Delormay, the editor Tirecruchon, and a number of other political captives, tumbled in, attracted by the report of Horace Gerold's presence.

Much hand-shaking ensued, as well as congratulations on the issue of the duel; but of pity for the fallen man not a word. To be sure, M. de Cosaque was not a personage in whose favor one could get up much sympathy. He had been as a Goliath in the midst of his party, overshadowing his foes with his shoulder-of-mutton fist, slapping their faces on slender pretexts, and transfixing them afterwards without remorse. To have wished him alive would have been to wish an ever-threatening foil over one's head.

"A more bloodthirsty dog I never set eyes on," ejaculated the fat M. de Tirecruchon, with a sigh of relief. "Egad! he had me out once. Happily, it was with pistols, but he blew half the rim of my hat away."

"*De mortuis*" — began honest Jean Kerjou. He had not yet got over the tragic episode of the morning.

Soon the room was hazy with tobacco-smoke, and a dozen prisoners lay or sat recumbent on sofa, arm-chairs, and ottoman; Horace forming the centre of the group, seated on a low stool, and being made much of by the rest. Still a little sore at Nestor Roche's strictures upon M. Macrobe, he was rather moody and silent, and hoped the financier and his offer would be allowed to drop for a while, until he could be alone with Nestor Roche, and talk the point over with him. But Jean Kerjou, who was uneasy, and wanted to get his mind clear, made haste to resume his interrupted appeal to the editor, and so drew on a general discussion concerning M. Macrobe's proposal to refund the damages. The case was quite a novel one, and tolerably difficult to pronounce upon impartially. Opinions were pretty equally divided.

M. de Tirecruchon, who was nothing if not indulgent of everybody's foibles, his own included, held stoutly with the Macrobian.

"Corbleu!" he exclaimed, rolling one of his flat *panatellas* between two thick fingers, and glancing at his editorial brother with surprise — "Corbleu! Roche, you're not going to refuse such an offer as that? Of course Macrobe is more or less of a rogue, but aren't we all rogues, present company excepted? I wouldn't give a fig for a man who wasn't something of a rogue. Besides, don't you see that the more you've got to

say against the man, so much the greater is the reason for taking his money? If what you said against him was true, *ergo*, it was no slander: consequently, the damages were unjustly assessed, and, therefore, obviously, you have a right to re-pocket them."

Horace bridled up.

"I didn't wish to see the matter viewed in that light; I would rather the offer were accepted generously, as it was made, and that we should acknowledge, some of us, that we may have been a little hasty in judging M. Macrobe."

"Yes, so should I," assented Jean Kerjou, candidly; "or, at least," added he, "I should like to hear something plain and provable against this man."

M. Max Delormay here felt it due to himself to protest energetically. The famous paragraph he had written against M. Macrobe, and for which he, as well as others, were suffering fines and imprisonment, had gradually come to assume in his eyes the proportion of an historical event. He was not very remote from the idea that since this paragraph the financier had become somehow his own peculiar private property, and that to speak of him in any way, either *pro* or *con*, without his, Max Delormay's, sanction, was to defraud him, Max Delormay, of his just privileges. Accordingly, he claimed his right to protest, and, in that sober tone which Frenchmen have when they don't know what they are saying, made a speech which nobody understood, he least of all; but which concluded with a panegyric of the Spartan Republic, as being a place where commercial morality flourished.

M. de Tirecruchon puffed his jovial face with an air of bewilderment, and cried: "Tut, Max, you're running off with the wrong bone. The question is, whether Roche shall accept back 25,000 francs paid by him as damages for an article you wrote. I say yes; and I've given you my reasons. As for morality nowadays, I'll tell you what it just amounts to — not being found out. Go you into the streets, and take at haphazard out of our church-folk, politicians, tradesmen, or out of us journalists, any hundred men, and I will be bound there are not two out of the lot whose lives will bear looking into with a microscope. Hang it all! let us not get to prying too closely behind each other's curtains. I don't know who this Macrobe is. In times past he may have been a coiner, for all I can tell; but at present the Government accepts him, the Law accepts him, and Society accepts him, so why shouldn't I? For come! what would it profit me, if, after making the acquaintance of the man, finding him pleasant, sensible, ready to do

me a good turn, &c., I were to go and rake up the diary of his life, to see if I could discover one soiled page in it? To-morrow the fellow might die; and what should I have gained by my trouble then? — not even the pleasure of cutting him. Much better seek to know nothing about the soiled page, and take the fellow's hand so long as I find it agreeable. Of course if I receive proof positive that the fellow is a cur, that's another question; but I haven't."

A small, dark man, squatting near the fire and smoking a clay pipe, whom Horace knew as the Citizen Albi, a political conspirator, who unaffectedly admired Robespierre, and was of opinion that the Reign of Terror had failed in its effects from not being quite stringent enough, here broke in vehemently:

"Your views are as immoral as they well can be. If adopted they would be the character of successful rogues. When you are hiring a servant you rake up all you can about him, and if you find a speck you draw back. I see no difference between rich rogues and poor. I have never yet given my hand to a man whose life was not as clear to me as the noon-day, and, so help me my own contempt for scoundrels, I never will."

"And what is the result, my poor Albi?" rejoined the stout editor, unruffled. "Why, ever since you could hold a musket you have been in open war with Society. Out of your short life of thirty years, you have spent eight in transportations or imprisonments; and I dare say, if I could read in your heart, I should find smouldering there the scheme of some new communistical era of guillotining, by which you hope to regenerate us. Those are gloomy principles, my poor friend, which make you thirst for our blood so ardently, and oblige Society in its own defence to make you pine away the best years of your young life behind prison bars."

"I do not see that I am to be pitied," answered Albi, in the same energetic tone as before. "Every man has his ambition. That of some men is to fill a pocket with gold pieces, that of others to tie a piece of red silk round their necks; yours is, I believe, to sell more copies of your newspaper than your neighbor over the way. I have mine, too, which is to establish a Republic of honest men. I care not the price I pay."

"And what is your idea of an honest man?" inquired Horace, eying him with curiosity.

Albi took the pipe out of his mouth and looked at him hard.

"You Gerolds are honest men," he said, slowly; "your father is an honest man and a credit to human nature. Your brother

promises to be like him; and I trust you will, too. You have been so hitherto." And he laid a marked stress on that word *hitherto*.

CHAPTER XIII.

M. POCHEMOLLE'S REQUEST.

THERE was no more talk about the five and twenty thousand francs. The conspirator Albi's utterances had fallen upon the free and easy conversation like a blast of hot air, withering it up by the roots. M. de Tirecruchon lapsed silent; and, presently, two of the crop-haired inmates of the penal wing coming in to lay the luncheon-cloth, Horace Gerold and Jean Kerjou took their leave.

"Lucky dogs!" sighed the fat editor, accompanying them to the end of the passage. "Yet two months before I may taste fresh air with you." He shook Horace's hand warmly, but holding it an instant, said: "Listen, M. Gerold. You pull too strong an oar for the 'Sentinelle.' You're a man of independent views, and don't like running in grooves; as well harness a race-horse to a stone cart, as keep you on a Radical paper. Your six months will be over soon. Come to me, you will find no dogmatism, and I don't set up for lecturing my contributors as to the acquaintances they choose."

Horace colored at this innuendo. Truth to say, he felt humiliated by the rebuke of Nestor Roche, and by the covert warning implied in the last words of Albi. Time was when he might have submitted to be sermonized by the old Republican, whom he esteemed; but success had raised his spirit, and he resented the stiffness with which the overtures of M. Macrobe, as conveyed through him, had been repulsed. There was something quite unreasonable in this frame of mind; for Nestor Roche might surely be excused for not feeling gushingly towards the man who had put him into prison; but reason is not the forte of youth; and in his pique, Horace betought him seriously that he had a grievance against his editor.

He said as much to Jean Kerjou as they left Sainte Pélagie; and emitted one or two bitter reflections as to the obstinacy of old Republicans.

Jean Kerjou, being a Breton, was a Legitimist, and a Catholic, and one who did not understand Republicans, nor quite realize what it was they wanted. His attachment to Horace had been formed on entirely

personal grounds; but as he himself wore amulets next his shirt, signed himself when he swore, and never mentioned the name of Henri V. without doffing his hat, it was a subject of wonder to him how any one of his birth and talent, could profess the opinions which Horace Gerold did. In a simple tone, and rather puzzled, he answered: "I can't quite make out your party; you don't seem to agree among you as we do."

"Are there no men in your party who set up for oracles?" asked Horace; the puritan sternness of Nestor Roche, and the caustic fervor of Albi, recurring to him and nettling him.

"Perhaps there may be, but I don't know them," replied the Breton, naively. "I am sure, though, we have none who lecture about morality as I've heard them do every time I have been in the company of Republicans. Why don't you join our paper?" he added. "Tirecruchon is a loose fish on the surface, but a good fellow underneath; and he sets us no tether, you know; our staff is like a winter soup, full of herbs of all colors; we have two or three of your hue, but we all get on together swimmingly as beans in a pot."

Similes were one of the strong points of Jean Kerjou; they garnished his eloquence as the small dice of garlic do the roast legs of mutton in the province which was his birthplace. Horace, however, made no answer; and soon they reached the Rue Ste. Geneviève, where the first person they met was the courtly M. Pochemolle, who fingered a long piece of stamped paper which he had just received from an individual with a blue bag.

"This is for you, M. Horace. Something about this morning's business, I'm afraid," he added, in a tone of condolence.

True enough. It was a summons to appear before the Public Prosecutor, on the charge of having wilfully killed and slain one Paul Panier, commonly called de Cosaque. M. Macrobe and Jean Kerjou were both included in the summons, for having unlawfully, and of malice prepense, aided and abetted the perpetration of that crime.

Horace had already seen the Pochemolles once that morning, for on his way to Ste. Pélagie, after breakfasting with M. Macrobe, he had stopped to shake hands with Emile and show Georgette, who had been in sickly suspense since daybreak, that he was safe. He now walked into the shop with Jean Kerjou, under pretence of reading his summons, and found Georgette still pale, but with a ray of happiness in her eyes. She had just come in from out of doors, and was drawing off some tiny gray kid gloves, much smaller and finer than the daughters of drapers usually wear. So at

least thought Jean Kerjou, who was observing her.

Madame Pochemolle was as gracious and smiling as it was her wont to be whenever M. Horace paid her a visit. M. Alcibiade Pochemolle, from sheer admiration at the sight of a man who had sent a fellow-being to his last account, allowed his ell-measure to drop. According to M. Alcibiade, the next best thing to having courage enough to kill a man one's self, was to behold some one who had performed such a deed. M. Alcibiade much regretted that he himself knew not how to fence. He was not ferocious; indeed, he was rather mild than otherwise; but he thought he should like to kill some other draper's son in fair combat.

Jean Kerjou, casting his eyes about the shop, which was fitted and wainscoted with the fine old oak of a century ago, lit upon the two famous prints showing the Rue Ste. Geneviève such as it existed in the reigns of Louis XIV., and Louis XV., and having ventured to admire these heirlooms, was soon led to discover the monarchical, aristocratical, and clerical proclivities of the Pochemolle household. The draper, his wife, and the journalist then fell into harmonious talk and regrets over those good times when kings had no legislatures to plague them, when there was a gibbet stationed permanently in front of Notre Dame, and when a tradesman of the Rue Ste. Geneviève would not so much as have eaten an egg on a Friday without leave from the Bishop of Paris. Horace followed Georgette into the little back parlor, where she went to take off her bonnet. The door remained open, but there was no reason why any words spoken there should be heard in the shop. Horace spoke low.

"You have been for a walk, Georgette?"

"No," she murmured; "it was not a walk."

"Where then?"

She looked at him with more tenderness than she was aware of in her glistening eyes:

"To church," she whispered.

"To church, Georgette! But this isn't Sunday."

"It's more than that to me," she replied, with a touching accent.

"And to what saint did you pray?"

A tear or two welled up into her eyes as she blushed and said, almost inaudibly: "Could I keep away from thanking the Virgin on the day when your life has run such dangers and been spared?"

There was so much delicate modesty in her manner of murmuring these words, and when she had uttered them the emotion that suffused her face, and the grace which

love lent to her demeanor, as she wavered between the fear of having said too much and the consciousness that all she might say would ill describe the tenth of what she felt — gave her such a charm that she looked to Horace more lovely and attractive than she had ever seemed before. He gazed on her with a sort of spell-bound and astonished admiration, as one contemplates a picture whose full beauties one had not at first suspected. But even as he was gazing the current of his thoughts was turned by a sudden reflection. A voice rose up within him and put the question, like a note of reproof: — Whither was all this tending, and what did he hope would be the result of the love which he was encouraging in this poor girl?

He was not flippant or profligate, and the question unsettled him. The finer feelings in his nature revolted at the thought of trifling with the affections of a woman — a child almost — who seemed to have given him her heart; and yet, except an illicit passion — seduction and its attendant ties — there was but one possible course open to him, and that was to let Georgette think that he intended marrying her; and to do so. He was not prepared for this last step; and as the conviction forced itself upon him that he was drifting into straits where no man ever yet steered right who did not arm himself with inflexible resolution, a cloud passed over his brow, and he bit his lips.

Their eyes met — hers candid and trustful, his restless and uncertain. Then he said to himself: "I must remove from this house, else there will be misfortune on us all."

He rose abruptly, shook hands with Georgette without looking at her, muttered a few words about hoping soon to see her again, and passed through the shop, telling Jean Kerjou they would meet by and by, but that for the present he had letters to write. He hurried up stairs to his rooms, repeating to himself in a troubled frame of mind that he must go, and would explain why to Emile when the latter came home. But before he had reached his door he heard steps behind him, and the voice of M. Pochemolle hailed him with a petition for a minute's interview: "M. Horace, sir, if you could be so kind as to give me a moment of your time. I want to ask your advice."

"Walk in," answered Horace, absently.

When they were alone together — M. Pochemolle planted on a chair, and rubbing his ear to find a suitable exordium; Horace seated at his desk, expecting it was a legal opinion that was going to be asked of

him — the draper began: "It's about Georgette, sir."

Horace started, and felt moisture bedew, ing his forehead.

"Yes, it's about my Georgette, sir," continued M. Pochemolle, not noticing any thing. "If I might make so bold as to say so, M. Horace, I look upon you almost as an old friend now. You're a wiser man too than I am, notwithstanding your years, which comes of learning; and I want you to give me advice. To tell you the truth, sir, our Georgette has not been well of late; I told your honored brother, M. Emile, so the other day. She's grown thin and pale, and doesn't talk as she used to do, nor laugh, nor seem to care much for things: all of which signs have been alarming her mother and me. But you know how women are, sir, and I don't think my wife and I would be likely to agree about our child's ailment, nor about the remedy for it. I ascribe a good deal of it to study and book-reading" (Horace gave a sigh of relief), "which is very well for men, — at least, for gentlemen — but isn't worth a rush for women. My respected mother — God bless her! — never read in any book save her ledger and her breviary, and this didn't prevent her making a true wife and a fine woman of business. But in these times old customs are dying out, and nothing would serve my wife but to have our Georgette brought up at a convent, where they taught her to strum on the piano, and paint flowers, and tell straight off on her fingers' ends who was Pope of Rome five hundred years ago, which seems to me about as useless knowledge for a tradesman's daughter as well can be. However, it was no good my attempting to say any thing, for when I wanted our Georgette to be taught cooking, and book-keeping, and all that makes a useful housewife, her mother wouldn't hear of it. My wife, you see, is of the modern sort. She wants me to make haste and get rich, and outshine our neighbors, and be a finer man than my father was; and as for Georgette, she dresses her up in silk, and counts upon marrying her to some gentleman who'll be several cuts above us, and shut his door in our faces when we go and call upon our child. Now, that's all very well in its way, but in Georgette's own interest, M. Horace, I want to prevent it. Not that I should grudge my daughter a husband after her own fancy, if I thought she had set her heart upon any one, and I found the man was respectable and paid his bills punctually; but I don't think she has; and there's a youth I have in my mind who's in love with her, and a very thrifty, intelligent lad into the bargain, who'd be sure to make her happy, and I should like

to bring the two together." Horace took up a quill, and hacked it with a pen-knife.

"Who is this youth, M. Pochemolle?"

"Well, sir, he's a commercial traveller. He's not often in Paris, but when he does come he lodges up on the sixth floor above our heads, renting a room there all the year round. He's a cheerful young man, always ready — too ready some say — to crack his jokes, and has known our Georgette ever since they were both no higher than this chair."

"Indeed!" broke in Horace, rather dryly; "is it the gentleman I have met once or twice on the staircase, who wears a Scotch tartan waistcoat, with a brass chain over it, rattles pence in his pockets, and whistles the 'Marseillaise' every time he comes up stairs?"

"That's he, I daresay," assented M. Pochemolle thoughtfully; "though I've never heard him whistle the 'Marseillaise'; but his chain's gold, M. Horace, I assure you, and probably eighteen-carat, for he's very well off. His name's Filoselle; he's been travelling since he was twenty, getting five per cent profit on all his commissions, and he's now twenty-eight, which makes a good deal of money. If he marries our Georgette, as he hopes to do, he means to set up in business for himself with the savings he has laid by."

Horace closed his pen-knife with a snap.

"And in what way can I assist you, M. Pochemolle?" he inquired.

"Well, sir," responded the draper, too intent upon his own thoughts to remark aught unusual in the tone of his lodger, — "Well, sir, M. Filoselle is a great favorite with us all, on account of his amusing ways. I sometimes think he'd make a stuffed bird laugh, would that young man. Of a winter evening, when he's in Paris, he often comes in, and makes himself sociable, telling stories, and playing tricks with cards, and the like; and turning the things upside down; and my wife thinks well of him, I'm sure; but between that and accepting him as a husband for Georgette, it is a long way; and, as for Georgette herself, why, I fancy she looks upon him as an old playfellow, but nothing else: so that Filoselle feels in a fix, and last time he was here, he told me that he shouldn't like to touch upon the question with the women down stairs until I had put in a good word for him."

Here M. Pochemolle shrugged his shoulders, and continued, dolefully, "But my putting in a good word would be just about as much use as arguing with a deaf post. My wife is a good woman, and I don't say but that she and I have got on smoothly together; but there's no tackling her about

her daughter. On that point she's brightly toity, and as foolish as women are when they get any fixed idea into their heads. I think, though, M. Horace" (and here the honest draper became appealing). — "I think you might help us. My wife has a high opinion of you, which is only natural and properly respectful on her part, and supposing, for instance, one day you had dropped into the shop by hazard like, I was to set the talk rolling on commercial travellers, and you were to join in and say there wasn't a more honorable profession going, and that they earned a deal of money, and were quite on a level with gentlemen, I think, sir, that might settle it."

M. Pochemolle fixed his eyes interrogatively on Horace.

"And have you yourself this high opinion of commercial travellers?" asked the latter.

"Well, I've a good opinion of those who get on in the business," answered the draper. "My wife she's all for scented gentlemen — even when they've got nothing in their pockets, which is less seldom than one supposes. If she could, she'd make a gentleman of me. As it is, she talked me into doing what I'd never done in my life before — invest money in one of those giant new companies that are all full like a balloon to-day, and all squash like nothing to-morrow. Happily, it's the *Crédit Parisien*, which M. Macrobe tells me is as safe as the Bank of France — and there's no denying it pays up well, and the shares are rising like quicksilver; but, to speak my mind, M. Horace, I don't fancy those kind of things. It's always been a motto in our family to sell fairly, to be content with few customers, but good, and to look to small profits but safe; and the man I want for my son-in-law is a man who thinks like me as nearly as possible — as I believe Filoselle does. He's not a genius, maybe, though geniuses behind the counter seem to me as much out of place as whales in a fish-tank; but he's a shrewd fellow, who'll give his wife a good home never let himself be caught with chaff, and keep clear of the *Tribunal de Commerce*."

The two purple ears, which ornamented the sides of M. Pochemolle's head like the handles of a jug, deepened in hue as he concluded the panegyric of his prospective son-in-law, and looked at the young barrister for an answer.

Had Horace prayed for it he could not have lighted upon a better opportunity of bringing his as yet innocent, but dangerous *liaison* with Georgette to an end. Nevertheless (Oh consistency of human nature!) the idea of Georgette being married now caused him, of a sudden, unaccountable

zation bordering on jealousy. He dismissed M. Pochemolle with a vague assurance that he would see about the matter, and do his best; and, when the good man had departed, happy with having obtained a powerful co-operation, he paced about his room, pondering how he might best thwart this intended marriage. Such is an where women are concerned — a being more capricious than woman herself.

Of course he did not acknowledge to himself of what nature were the feelings that prompted him to think as he was doing, or the human mind, in its queerest fits of selfishness, is ever ingenious at putting a color of honesty on its schemes. He argued with himself that Georgette was too good for this commercial traveller, who wore a tartan waistcoat, and looked like a mob; that he would be doing her a service in preventing her being tied for life to this man; that she was a refined, well-educated girl, who deserved a better fate, &c., &c. The Devil, who was close at hand, found him logic as much as he needed.

Whilst he was thus brooding peevishly, not very well pleased with himself, he strayed into his brother's room, and stopped, with his eyes fixed on the portrait of his and Emile's mother hanging over the mantle-piece.

Their mother was as a dim vision to both the brothers, for she had died when they were too young to miss the guiding spirit they were losing. Horace, however, being by three years the eldest, could remember more than Emile, and he would often gaze abstractedly at the portrait, trying to recall a living image from out of the faint pencilled features. He did so now; and the effect upon him was soothing and beneficial, as all thoughts of a loved and lost mother must be. Whilst he looked, the unworthy impulses within him seemed slowly to subside, then to melt. His better nature regained the mastery. He felt ashamed of having wavered even for a moment, and took the resolution there and then to do his duty. "I must not see Georgette again," he murmured; "and I had better do what her father wishes — put in a word for this tradesman."

"Ah! they told me you were at home," cried a voice behind him. "I've come to fetch you off to dinner. You know we've got things to talk about. We're going to be tried for manslaughter together."

And M. Macrobe, who had intruded himself noiselessly into the room, held out his hand.

Horace gave a start, but he shook the hand though it seemed to him that in doing so he was swearing friendship to a sort of black-coated Mephistopheles.

CHAPTER XIV.

M. MACROBE INSERTS THE THIN END OF THE WEDGE.

M. MACROBE'S face was against him, but if you gave him half an hour to talk it away, and another half-hour to make you forget the suspicious stories you had heard concerning him, he was a pleasant companion. He took Horace to dine at his own house in the Avenue des Champs Elysées: not a formal repast with guests eying one another ceremoniously over white neck-ties, but what he called a quiet dinner *sans façon*, to which he had invited a few nice fellows, and at which there were no ladies present. Our young friend was a little surprised at the luxury of the banker's residence, to which he had as yet seen nothing comparable, not even in the one or two lordly mansions of the Faubourg St. Germain where it had been his fate to visit. Every thing, from the glossy livery of the porter, who swung open the gilt bronze gates as they drove up, down to the cipher and crest engraved on the massive plate of the dinner-table, bore the impress of solid, although new-made wealth. It was not foolish wealth however, such as does not know where to bestow itself, and heaps around it vulgar and cumbersome splendor which dazzles without exciting admiration. M. Macrobe had seen too much of life not to have learned good taste. As he ushered his guest through a series of spacious and elegantly appointed saloons into a dining-room teeming with brilliancy and light, he flattered himself that if there were houses in Paris equal to his own, there were few superior, and he was not wrong.

The emotions of the day had been so numerous and varied that they had slightly unnerved Horace, and disposed him to accept any diversion as welcome. He was in that state of mind when friendliness comes as a balm, and slight attentions are received with a gratitude deeper, sometimes, than the occasion warrants. His duel of the morning — the gloomy horror of which was beginning to strike him with a dull force now that he was cool and could reason; — his unsatisfactory interview with Nestor Roche; the doubts that he could not altogether allay, as to the conduct he ought to have adopted and should adopt in the future towards Georgette; all these were harassing topics, which he was glad to dismiss for a while from his agitated brain. So the dinner was a relief to him, and therefore, from M. Macrobe's point of view, a success. That gentleman had indeed spared nothing to make it so. The viands were choice, the conversation agreeable, and the

guests all men famous in their respective walks, who treated Horace with a courteous deference which flattered him. Jean Kerjou was there, endowed with the excellent appetite that befitted his mediæval tastes, and, like his friend, not sorry to place the fumes of champagne between himself and the bloody scenes of the morning. The Breton journalist had a constitutional horror of bloodshed — which was the more remarkable as he himself had been out twice, and each time killed his man. But, perhaps, in his opinion this did not count, for he was a fiery Papist, and the two brother journalists he had slain were only Voltairians.

The other guests were: Baron Margauld the banker, husband to the *Madame de Margauld* Horace had already met in society — a grave emphatic man, suspected of Orleanism, but respected by the Government on account of his solid credit and his unaffected detestation of Radicals: M. Arsène Gousset, a sparkling novelist, in great favor at court, and mightily popular with women, though he passed his time in railing bitterly at the former and inditing cutting satires upon the latter; and the Prince of Arcola, descended from one of the first Napoleon's Field-Marschals — a young gentleman of eight and twenty, with a very grand air and high tone, tempered, however, with a good-humored listlessness, which generally rose to the surface, once the ice of formalism was broken. This, with the eminent surgeon who had attended the combat in the morning, made seven who sat down to table. But presently, when the soup had been removed, and two giants were handing round turbot and salmon-trout, entered, like a rush of wind, Mr. Drydust, the celebrated correspondent of a London penny paper, who, with florid grace, excused himself for being late, on the ground that he had just been having an interview with the Minister of State. It was the peculiarity and good fortune of Mr. Drydust that he was always having interviews with Cabinet Ministers.

As the duel had created a considerable sensation, and was for the nonce the one subject of gossip about town, it was unavoidable that some allusion should be made to it, and that Horace should receive the congratulations which are customary under such circumstances. Mr. Drydust, especially, seemed to know more about the occurrence than the parties themselves. He had written a full-length and erroneous account of it to his paper that afternoon, and on learning that he actually had opposite to him the man who had rid Paris of the dreaded M. de Cosaque, he proceeded, somewhat to the dismay of M. Macrobe, to rattle off with immense volubility, and in first-rate

French, the names of all the illustrious persons of his acquaintance who had fought duels — winding up with the case of two distinguished British nobles who had wished to exterminate one another on Calais sands, but had been happily prevented by his timely interference. Horace listened with a rather embarrassed air; and Jean Kerjou furtively made the sign of the cross, in obedience to the superstition which holds it unlucky to speak of slaughter at table. But Mr. Drydust soon turned his attention to other themes. He apostrophized the Prince of Arcola:

"Prince, I was at Chantilly the day before yesterday, and saw your filly, 'Mozador,' do her canter. Take my advice and back her in preference to her stable-companion, 'Namouna,' for the *Prix de Diane*. I was talking about it to Lagrange; he thinks she'll win."

"Ah!" said the Prince, languidly, "I thought Count de Lagrange had got a filly of his own in the race."

"So he has; but I told him it wasn't worth a stiver. Lord Martingale was of the same opinion."

"Why, what has come over the filly then? Last week Lord Martingale backed her against my stable at five to one."

The Prince of Arcola had two passions: horse-racing and nobility. On the first he spent two-thirds of his income, which was large; on the second he lavished what spare time he had, reading books of heraldry and chivalrous chronicles. It was a most sore point with him that his title dated no farther back than half a century, and had been conferred, in a batch, by a Napoleon. He would have bartered it with all his heart, high-sounding as it was, for a simple barony of mediæval creation; and when M. Macrobe whispered to him, in introducing Horace Gerold, that this was the young barrister who might call himself Marquis of Clairefontaine if he chose, he eyed Horace much as one contemplates a phenomenon, and soon set the conversation going on the Castle of Hautbourg, which he appeared to know from roof to basement, furniture included, as if he had been residing there for the last twelvemonth. He had a way of talking, when launched on his favorite topics, which lacked neither fire nor grace; and Horace followed him with a secret and altogether new interest as he dilated with enthusiasm on the broad acres, gray towers, old pictures, arms and sculptured halls of Hautbourg. "One of the finest domains I know," said he, "in this or any other country. Do you often go down there for shooting?" he added: and this question breaking the spell, Horace answered, a little dryly, that he never went there at all. Whereat

the Prince stared, and by and by observed with a sigh: "Political conviction must be very strong, M. Gerold, to make one renounce such treasures. I couldn't do it."

Mr. Drydust, who was patronizing the banker Margauld, giving him information as to scrip and share, current quotations, and the prospects of the new Irrawaddi loan, here cut in. He had caught the word "shooting," and immediately started upon a description of the great estates with which he was familiar—Windsor Castle, Knowsley, Chatsworth, Stowe, Eaton Court, &c.: all places where, by his own account, he was wont to go and divert himself with a few weeks' sport when he had nothing better to do. His rapid sketches were so vivid and well-colored that M. Arsène Gousset, deferring modestly to him as a superior genius, remarked how much democratic France was behind aristocratic England from the artist's point of view.

"With our code of equality and our parcelling of land," said he, "we have suppressed great wealth and pomp, and consequently, picturesqueness. Wishing to be all of a size, we have dragged the nobles off their high towers and forced them to stand shoulder to shoulder with us in a flat plain, where no man's head may rise above those of his fellows under pain of making the rest cry out. French society has become a landscape without hills, a sea without waves, a house without gables;—any thing you please that is dull and commonplace. It may be correct, but it is very ugly."

"Yet equality is one of the first conditions of progress," remarked the eminent surgeon; who, like most eminent surgeons, professed extreme liberalism, the more so at this moment, as he had expected to be made surgeon to the court, but been disappointed.

"Ah! progress," exclaimed the novelist, with a shrug, as he put down a glass of Tokay,—"progress, doctor, is a word coined by journalists and barristers, to signify that nowadays it is they who rule the roost. We have superseded the nobles, and given ourselves for a prey to the men who talk and the men who write, and we call that abolishing caste rule. They say merit has better chances than it used to have; but, pray, when was merit more respected than when low-born Froissart consorted on terms of equality with the proudest noblemen of France? When Rabelais, a witty curate, was the friend of Francis the First? When Charles the Ninth did homage in verse to Ronsard? And when Louis the Fourteenth himself, who would not have bared his head to an emperor, waited at table upon Molière? If we look past history through, we shall scarce find a man of any worth in art, politics, or science, who

was not petted, honored, and enriched by the great of his time. With all our boast of progress and equality, there is not a court in Europe that would receive a goldsmith as Benvenuto Cellini was received at the Court of France; there is not a potter of our day who could hope to win the distinctions that Bernard de Palissy earned. Charles the Fifth of France ennobled the man who set up the first clock; did we do as much for the man who invented photography? Gutemberg, it is true, led a struggling life, but was George Stephenson's path strewn with roses? and of the two, which, think you, were most to blame, the mediævals who were tardy to acknowledge the advantages of writing by machinery instead of by hand, or the moderns who, after recognizing what they term the benefits of railways, suffered the inventor to be laid in the earth without a single token of gratitude from the State? In politics, again, because we stock our cabinets with superannuated lawyers and jaded leader-writers, carefully excluding the rest of the world, we cry out that we have thrown open a broad career to talent, just as if our ancestors had not done so before us, and more liberally. What were Richelieu and Colbert but friendless men of middle-class estate, who, by mere dint of adroitness, acquired the patronage of powerful noblemen, by whom they were introduced and pushed forward at court? The fact is, any man with brains and pleasant manners could make his way in former times, and was not obliged to wait until his teeth were loose and his hair fell off, as seems to be indispensable in our day. A fellow of parts attached himself to the suite of a noble, became his patron's adviser, then his friend, was presented to the king, flattered him—and why not? I would as lief flatter a king to obtain a bunch of seals as a ragamuffin to catch a vote—and with a little patience and wit rose to be Prime Minister, like the two I have named; or High Chancellor, like L'Hôpital and Harlay; or Marshal of France, like Turenne and Catinat (who were the sons of small country gentlemen); or Bishop, like Bossuet and Fléchier,—the latter of whom was bred a tallow-chandler. The best of it was, too, that we took these men young, when their intellects were in their vigor: for progress had not yet made it a law that our statesmen should be old men stricken with the gout, and our generals aged cripples, with all the genius frozen out of them by rheumatism. Had they lived in our day, Richelieu would not have been, at thirty, a curate with fifty napoleons a year; Turenne a lieutenant, wondering whether he should ever be a major; and Colbert a government clerk in

the office of Mr. Drydust's friend, Monsieur Gribaud."

Mr. Drydust nodded assent. He thought the atmosphere of modern civilization stifling. Nevertheless, he was in favor of renny papers. All things considered, he should like to be living under Louis XI., with the cheap press flourishing as an institution.

But the novelist was averse to such a combination. He was not fond of the Press, and took no pains to conceal it. Cracking filberts composedly, and smiling within his well-trimmed yellow beard, he amused himself and the rest of the table by passing in review the Paris Press, and grimly bespattering the whole journalistic profession, without bitterness, but without mercy. He made an exception in favor of the "Sentinelle" and the "Gazette des Boulevards," out of respect for the two writers present; but he could not refrain from giving a side cuff to the editors of those journals, MM. de Tirecruchon and Roche: the former of whom he described as the most agreeable humbug he knew, and the latter as a vinegar-cruet — cold without and sour within. It was pleasure to watch the starched features of the Baron Margauld relax whilst this performance was going on. He, too, was no friend of the Press: "a dangerous, meddlesome institution," as he termed it.

His satisfaction bordered upon mirth when the novelist continued: "You are right to call the Press a power, for it is a power for destruction, like gunpowder or corrosive acid: but it has never built up any thing, and never will. Since daily newspapers have come among us, the word 'stability' has ceased to have any sense, and should disappear from the dictionary. Nothing is stable nowadays: neither thrones, nor constitutions, nor religions. A journalist is a man who devotes his time to finding out the weak points in human institutions, political or social, and hammering upon them continually until the whole structure falls to pieces. There is very little discrimination in his work: for with him it is not a question of being right or wrong, but of filling up three or six columns a week. If the times be fertile in large abuses, so much the wider his choice of subjects; but if the Government be an honest one, and there be only small abuses, he will assail these small abuses at just the same length, and with precisely the same vigor of invective, as the larger ones. Louis Philippe was attacked more severely than Charles X., and the republic of '48 more pitilessly than Louis Philippe. There is not a government on earth can bear up against the three-column system; heaven

itself couldn't stand it. If ever the millennium arrives, it will have to begin by gagging the Press, else in twenty years it will go the way of all other governments."

The banker Margauld bent his head and coughed, in token of enthusiastic concurrence. But the Prince of Arcola whispered with a smile, to his neighbor: "I fancy M. Gousset is himself a victim of the three-column system. His last novel met with some rather rough handling, did it not?"

It was now time for coffee; and M. Macrobe rose to lead the way to his smoking-room — an apartment of sybaritish comfort and luxury, fitted up like an Arab tent, with Turkey carpets a foot thick, and low divans, into which the human form sank, stretched enjoyably at full length.

In the passage to this *buen-retiro* Mr. Drydust naturally contrived to push to the front once more as leader of the conversation, — the only post his coruscating genius brooked. Cigars, with curiously outlandish names, but of exquisite smell and savor, were produced from cedar-wood cases; the powdered gentlemen poured fragrant coffee, steaming hot, into cups small and transparent as egg-shells; and whilst the fumes of Mocha, blending with those of Havana, were rising spirally towards the ceiling, the British journalist resumed his observations upon men and things, and the company were soon wrapped in the pyrotechnic blaze of that gentleman's utterances, which were always entertaining, sometimes even dazzling to his audience. The performance was not so engrossing, however, but that the Prince of Arcola, who was seated on the same ottoman, as Horace, found occasion to strike up with the latter what the French call an exchange of good proceedings. He admired the modest young barrister. He paid him compliments with that insinuating and polished grace of which the French are such masters, asked him to breakfast at his house in the Rue Lafite — one of the largest and most hospitable in the Chaussée d'Antin — and ended by offering to propose him for election at the club of the Rue Royale.

"You should belong to a club," said he: "clubs are social ménageries; one meets all the lions there. They are one of the many good things we have borrowed from the English, to whom we are indebted for pretty nearly every thing that makes existence tolerable."

"I shall be happy to second you," added Baron Margauld, whom Horace struck as a quiet, earnest young man, and worth weaning from Radicalism.

Horace thanked them, but declined; for a Paris club and a London one are not quite the same things. In four cases out

of five, the former is little more than a sumptuous gambling-house in disguise; and of all the gambling-houses of the capital, the Cercle de la Rue Royale was the most celebrated, as well as the most splendid. The prince did not press his offer, but wondered a little that Horace should allege want of means as one of the reasons for declining it.

The court novelist volunteered on his side to introduce Gerold to some of the leading authors, and this proposal was accepted gratefully.

"I know most of the journalists," said Horace, "and I have seen Monsieur Hugo at Brussels; but I should feel it an honor to be acquainted with our other national glories—M. de Musset, M. Ponsard, M. Gautier, and M^{me}. Sand." He added something gracious as a hint that he had perused all M. Arsène Gousset's works, and ranked him, too, amongst the national glories. The novelist was sensible to the homage, and, towards midnight, when Horace had retired with his friend, Jean Kerjou, after accepting the Prince of Arcola's invitation to breakfast, and making a luncheon appointment with M. Macrobe for the next day, that they might appear before the public prosecutor together, he exclaimed with some admiration, "Good blood will out. That young Gerold has the manners of a duke; he is serious, dignified, and absolutely unaffected. It is incomprehensible to me that he should elect to be a *sans-culotte*."

"He has fallen into bad hands," sighed M. Macrobe unctuously.

"Yes, but what makes him talk about the mediocrity of his means?" interposed the Prince of Arcola, with curiosity. "The Hautbourg estates are worth a million francs a year, if they are worth a centime. What do the Gerolds do with all their money?"

"Ah, there you put a question I should like to solve myself," replied M. Macrobe. "The Gerolds are millionaires, I know, but they live as if they were poor. The father has a small lodging on a fifth floor at Brussels; I had inquiries made there by our correspondent. The police think they spend their fortune on secret societies; but this is probably a guess."

"There would be no derogation in it," said the prince. "If a man of birth goes in for people's rights, he is quite right to do it grandly; and there would be something not unbecoming in young Gerold putting himself at the head of an occult social movement destined to revolutionize the country. After all, he would only be reenacting the part the Montmorencys and the Colignys played when they took the

lead of the Huguenots, who were the Radicals of their time."

"For myself," chimed in the court novelist, composedly, "I should not be sorry if there were a good sanguinary break-out, like the Reign of Terror, only worse. I am convinced that if the Radicals were allowed their head for a few years, they would lead France such a gallop, that she would leap madly back into royalty, feudalism, and rabid popery to get rid of them. Then we should have a century or so of peace."

"God bless my soul! you are surely not speaking in earnest," cried out the banker Margauld in disgust. He had seen revolutions face to face, and thought them no themes for jocularity. Happily Mr. Drydust was by to reassure him. According to this eminent person, the Second Empire was unshakable, having the sympathies of democratic England with it. These sympathies found expression in the penny sheet, to which Mr. Drydust contributed, and were enough to keep any throne stable to all eternity. "Besides," added he, "you may make your mind perfectly easy, baron, and you, too, M. Macrobe, for M. Gerold does not spend his money on secret societies. I will tell the Prefect of Police so next time I talk to him. I know the man who is the soul of all the French secret societies; it's that arch-revolutionist Albi; he's in prison now,—an intimate friend of mine—but a dark-minded character, who would no more agree with young Gerold, nor roost in the same nest with him, than a crow would with a starling." Then Mr. Drydust proceeded to explain how secret societies were organized; after which he speculated as to how the Gerolds spent their money; but eventually finding the problem insoluble, branched off into a disquisition upon "odd people," whose lives were a mystery to the community. M. Macrobe reiterated his regrets that Gerold had fallen into bad hands, and Mr. Drydust assented. He further engaged to bring him back by degrees to the right way, by giving him as much of his society as was compatible with his—Mr. Drydust's—other and multifarious occupations.

Meanwhile, the subject of these remarks, rolling homeward in a cab, was reflecting with satisfaction on the delicate, and even generous behavior of M. Macrobe; for, just as Horace was leaving, the financier had drawn him aside and said, "My dear young friend, I am not surprised at M. Roche having refused the twenty-five thousand francs; for, though honest, I fancy he is a little opinionated—isn't he?—and not quite exempt from narrow-mindedness. Such, at least, is the character he has always borne in the press, and, if you will

allow me to say so, I have heard it deplored that a man of your wonderful and shining abilities should be tied to the same wheel as a person so cramped in intellect. The money must now go to the poor, and here I should really esteem it a favor if you could recommend me any worthy persons on whom to bestow it. As a liberal writer, you are, probably, often besieged with applications from needy people, whose political opinions make it difficult for them to obtain relief through the usual channels. There must be numerous families of poor Republicans who took part in the affair of '48, and who would stand no chance of obtaining any thing from the Municipal Bureaux de Bienfaisance: these are the very people I should like to assist. And now, as to this trial of ours, I suppose you are aware that, from a certain point of view, it is a less serious matter to kill one's adversary in a duel than to wound him. If you wound him, you are tried in the Correctional Court by three judges, without jury, and you are safe to be imprisoned; in the other case, you are arraigned at the Assizes before a jury, and are invariably acquitted. However, we shall have to prepare a defence of some sort, and so I have been thinking we could not do better than have one counsel for the three of us, and that counsel your own brother, whose abilities I hear so warmly eulogized. The trial will be sure to draw a great crowd, and will help him forward in his profession. I shall instruct my solicitor to offer him my brief, and I trust you will prevail upon him to accept it."

"It was thoughtful," mused Horace; "and it was gracious. The man is a gentleman, and it is a pity I ever joined in calumniating him."

CHAPTER XV.

HOW EMPIRES ARE GOVERNED.

ON the morrow, at about the time when Horace Gerold, Jean Kerjou, and M. Marobe were being minutely cross-questioned by the Public Prosecutor as to their motives for maliciously slaying an official journalist, his Excellency M. Gribaud, Minister of State, was holding audiences at his residence in the Louvre, and it was noticed by all whom applications for patronage, favors, or redress brought into contact with that great man, that his Excellency was not at all in a good humor that morning.

Towards mid-day M. Camille de Beau-

feuille, one of the Minister's secretaries, a grave diplomatic young gentleman of irreplicable attire, issued from his chief's presence, and remarked to a brother secretary in an ante-room: "The governor has turned out of bed the wrong side this morning."

"Ah!" exclaimed the other, with an intonation that betokened neither amazement nor great concern; and looking up from the "Moniteur" with which he was beguiling the tedium of business hours, he added: "Summer heat doesn't agree with the old fellow; he's been bitter as a weed this some time past."

"He has sent me out to take stock of the unfortunates who are kicking their heels about in the waiting-rooms," resumed M. de Beaufeuille; and saying this, he touched a bell on the table.

An usher with a silver chain round his neck, appeared.

"Is the slate very full, Bernard?"

"Very, sir; I much fear his Excellency will have a heavy morning; there are above twenty people waiting." And at the bidding of the young man, the venerable Bernard recapitulated the names of all the persons in attendance—a goodly list, on which figured many ladies of beauty come to solicit distinctions for their husbands; many gentlemen devoid of beauty, but replete with ambition, come to beg honors for themselves; and a remnant of individuals whose errands were purely disinterested and undertaken only from a desire to serve the State. Amongst these last was our friend Mr. Drydust, who stated that his business was important.

"I think you had better show in the English journalist first," hazarded M. Camille. "I believe the Government considers him useful."

But at that moment entered a second usher, who said: "M. Louchard, the Commissary of Police has just arrived." An intimation which caused the secretary to vanish for a minute, and, on returning to say: "M. Louchard takes precedence of everybody. His Excellency will see him at once."

In another couple of minutes M. Louchard, the commissary, had been conducted deferentially through the ante-room, and was closeted in private with the Minister. The two secretaries pulled faces behind him when he had passed; but this M. Louchard did not notice.

His Excellency M. Gribaud was one of the bulwarks of the Second Empire. Formerly, he had been one of the bulwarks of the Republic, and indeed it was his mission, in a general way, to be the bulwark of every party that happened to be in the

ascendent. In appearance, he somewhat belied his Christian name of Augustus, for he was not august at all; but he had a curious penetrating eye, that partook of the vulture's and the money-lender's, and a tongue as pointed and insinuating as a gimlet. It was this tongue that had helped to make the fortune of M. Gribaud. Most people when speaking in public are apt to hesitate now and then to find the correct term; but not so M. Gribaud. Nobody had ever known him pause for a word. Correct or no, he spoke straight on with imperturbable assurance, and the policy he pursued in elocution he followed, also, in all the aims of his life, never allowing himself to be impeded by a scruple, nor balked by a regard for others. Such a man was sure to succeed. He was just the Minister to ride rough-shod over opposition, for there was no silencing him, and he was not in the least particular as to his choice of argumentative weapons. If pressed close by the logic of an adversary, he quietly called him a liar. One of his greatest oratorical triumphs had been obtained by accusing an honorable political opponent of being sold to a foreign government. He had no proofs to support the charge, but neither had his antagonist any to refute it; and, in such cases, it is always the more worthy of the contending parties — i.e., the man in office — who is believed. The charge almost broke the heart of the political opponent, but it greatly added to the credit of M. Gribaud, who came to be looked upon in Imperialist circles as a debater of no ordinary value.

When the Commissary of Police entered, M. Gribaud was seated at his desk, dressed in black clothes too large for him, and a stiff white cravat, that gave him the appearance of an unusually ferocious Dissenting minister. With a thick, knotty hand he was holding up a pair of double eyeglasses, through which he scrutinized, narrowly and frowningly, a despatch from a prefect. At sight of M. Louchard he wasted no time in vain courtesies, but cried out, "I can't make out what your agents are about, M. Louchard. They never tell me anything. All the information I get as to passing events comes from private sources. Two Roman Republicans spent the day before yesterday in Paris, and you were quite ignorant of the fact; yet your orders are to keep the closest watch upon every Italian who sets foot in the city."

"I am sure they did not put up at any hotel, your Excellency," pleaded M. Louchard, humbly but firmly, "else I should have known it, and sent you a report."

"They came by the mail-train from England, and returned the same night. Your

detectives at the railway terminus should have recognized them for Italians, and followed them. Had they been bent upon assassinating any of us, they might have done it with complete security. But that is not all. Why have I had no report about the three medical students who hissed a loyal song at a music-hall last Monday night? nor about M. Giroux-Ette, my predecessor in office, and a senator, who, on Tuesday, conversed amicably for a whole hour in a public place, with the radical barrister, Claude Febvre? nor about Madame de Masseline, the wife of an official deputy who spoke slightly of me at one of her dinner-parties? Why have I been apprised of none of these circumstances? The police are growing either blind or careless, M. Louchard."

"Not blind or careless, your Excellency," protested M. Louchard with meekness; "but the police have a great deal to do, and it is difficult for them to be everywhere at once."

"What is the use of them, then?" retorted the Minister, roughly. "It is the business of the police to have their eyes everywhere. We don't stint you with money. You should see into every house as if its walls were of glass."

"We do our best," muttered M. Louchard. "There are few houses of consequence where we have not one or two emissaries on the visiting list. Madame de Masseline herself is most zealous in conveying information as to all she hears, and I am certain that if she allows herself to speak disparagingly of your Excellency, it was rather for the purpose of sounding her guests than to emit any opinion of her own."

"Humph!" murmured his Excellency, who appeared less certain than the police official. "I did not know Madame de Masseline was on your books, M. Louchard. If I were you I would rely as little as possible on women; their information is seldom accurate, and there is generally some woman's quarrel or jealous pique at the bottom of their denunciations. I have noticed they never tell tales of a man who has a good figure and curly hair, unless they have been jilted by him. But enough of this. What have you got to tell me this morning?"

"I have come about this Gerold affair — this duel," began M. Louchard. "I thought your Excellency might have some orders to give me."

"A pretty piece of work that duel," grumbled the Minister, his brow darkening. "You suffered this peevish young Radical to kill one of our most serviceable writers; yet you had several hours' notice of the duel, and might easily have stopped it."

"I counted that matters would turn out

differently. I imagined M. de Cosaque would kill M. Gerold," observed the commissary, naively.

"You don't seem very lucky in your calculation," was the Minister's dry answer; but he passed lightly over the subject, for he too had known of the duel beforehand, and if he had not thought expedient to stop it, there is a presumption that some such motive lay uppermost in his mind as had actuated M. Louchard. He remained silent a moment, stroking his short pointed chin with his hard hand, and peering with a brooding expression at the commissary. Perhaps during that moment he recalled the time when the two young Gerolds were bright boys, whom he used to go and see at school, and when their father was a friend whom he honored and by whom he was esteemed. Those were far-off days, and probably the remembrance of them was not over-pleasant: for M. Gribaud broke out morosely, "Look here, M. Louchard; I've had enough of this M. Horace Gerold. Things were going on very well before he turned up; the Opposition were almost silent; but now it looks as if the old nonsense were coming back. This young Gerold is becoming a power. People talk about him in society; he has all the women on his side; in a word, he is dangerous. It is time you saw to him. That was a very suspicious document you showed me some time ago—I mean that deed of gift. If those two youths are already possessors of the Hautbourg estate, they are millionnaires, and their leading the bread-and-water life they do is a queer circumstance that has a strong smell of conspiracy about it. You must have a close surveillance set upon both the brothers; they must not be lost sight of a minute; you must ascertain what they do, where they go whom they see; their letters must be opened at the post-office, and if you discover that they habitually frequent or correspond with men of extreme opinions, there will be enough in that to furnish a handle to the Public Prosecutor. At all events—and I hope you understand me, M. Louchard—M. Horace Gerold must be got rid of; we must frighten him into running back to Belgium, and if he won't go, why" (M. Gribaud threw a significant glance at the commissary)—"why I dare say it won't be very difficult to send him where tougher men than he have gone—on a forced voyage to Cayenne."

Accustomed as M. Louchard was to the mention of Cayenne and Lambessa as fitting places of resort for Liberals, and animated as he moreover was, against Horace Gerold by the recollection of how the latter had treated him on the occasion of the domiciliary visit, he felt a creeping sensa-

tion in the back at the grim coolness of the Minister's tone. M. Gribaud, indeed, made no more bones about removing an enemy from his path than about fillying a speck of dust off his coat. The commissary answered with his usual abject deference, "It shall be done as your Excellency wishes." Then he twirled his hat for a few moments between his fingers, as if doubtful whether to proceed with certain other communications he had intended making, until, finally, a thought seemed to strike him, and he said:—"If your Excellency will allow me to express an opinion, I think M. Horace Gerold, though dangerous, may turn out to be less so than his brother. My men have had their eyes on both for some time, and M. Emile is the one who appears to me the most vicious. He never goes into society nor to the theatre; he works very hard; he has few friends, and those all of the worst sort—hardened Republicans; he distributes a great deal of money amongst the poor, and visits them at their own houses; he also lends them books, which I take to be a mischievous symptom; for the poor who read become unmanageable. M. Horace, I am bound to say, is just the contrary. He mixes a good deal with everybody, and just now he has got into good hands—those of M. Macrobe, the banker, your Excellency. If your Excellency would have very precise information as to M. Horace Gerold's sayings and doings, there is not a better man to apply to than M. Macrobe. He had M. Gerold to dinner with him last night; and being a most loyal Imperialist, deeply attached to your Excellency, I can vouch that he would completely enter into your views with regard to watching the young man and reporting all he saw."

A belief in M. Macrobe—that is, in the man whose financial science was so profound, and whose hints were such a god-send to those on whom he deigned to bestow them—was one of the articles of M. Louchard's creed. He therefore turned completely sallow when in a short tone M. Gribaud replied:—"M. Macrobe is coming here presently, and possibly I may have to give you some instructions concerning him, M. Louchard. I have sent for him to explain his conduct in overtly taking part against a Government writer in a public restaurant, and in assisting this M. Gerold as second. M. Macrobe is a gentleman who had best mind his p's and q's. He has been tolerated because he was useful; but if he thinks himself strong enough to indulge in vagaries, he must be shown he is mistaken."

M. Louchard dug his right hand deep into one of the hind pockets of his coat,

and drew from it a yellow bandanna handkerchief, of which he proceeded to make a sudden and noisy use. Had any of the familiars of the commissary been present, they would have recognized in this behavior the infallible portent of extreme bewilderment, such as could only have arisen from the violence of internal emotion. M. Louchard, indeed, would as soon have expected to hear M. Gribaud attack his Majesty the Emperor as the powerful Director of the *Crédit Parisien*. M. Gribaud, who could not be supposed to know this, added sharply: "Have you any thing further to say, M. Louchard? time is scarce and I've none to waste."

"I—I—had one or two other observations to suggest," stammered M. Louchard, making an effort to rally; "but another occasion will do—when your Excellency is less engaged."

"I am not likely to be less engaged until I am out of office," rejoined the Minister with dryness. "If you have any thing to say, out with it at once."

Just then there was a knock, and the venerable Bernard glided into the room. He whispered a few words to the statesman, and withdrew.

"Here is M. Macrobe just come," remarked the latter, addressing M. Louchard. "So make haste, please."

Perhaps it was the timely reflection that after all, M. Macrobe was very well able to take care of himself, and would, in all probability, not fail to do so when necessary, or perhaps it was simply the long-acquired habit of never letting himself be long troubled by a care about others, that caused M. Louchard abruptly to shake off his momentary stupefaction, and to discharge in a business-like manner the remainder of the errand on which he had come.

"I desire to recommend to your Excellency's indulgence, a journalist at present undergoing imprisonment," said he. "It is M. de Tirecruchon, the editor of the '*Gazette des Boulevards*.'"

"I know him well," responded his Excellency; "as troublesome a scribbler as any in France. His paper is always turning me into ridicule."

"He is certainly troublesome," assented M. Louchard. "But he often rendered us small services, and would do more if coaxed and humored a little. He is not a penman who could be bought with cash, like several other of the Opposition writers in our pay; but small favors would go a long way with him; they would be a profitable investment."

"Humph!" grumbled his Excellency.

"Besides," insinuated the commissary, "he has already been in prison some time,

and we should only be remitting two months of his sentence. Your Excellency knows the '*Gazette des Boulevards*' is a paper with which it is politic, so far as is possible, to keep on good terms. Everybody reads it, and, though professing to be independent, it gives us valuable assistance in discrediting the Republicans, whom it jeers at, and unmasks most praiseworthy. Since its editor has been in prison, however, it has been dead against us, and most biting in its sarcasms. I think if we were to free M. de Tirecruchon, and offer him some small facilities in the way of sale, such as allowing his paper to be sent into the provinces by the parcels-delivery, which would give him a start of the other journals, who are obliged to send theirs by post, we should find ourselves the better for it."

"Well, well, I'll see," growled the great M. Gribaud. "I don't like your M. de Tirecruchon. He's one of your confounded, sneering Parisians who respect nothing and nobody. I don't see that he can be better than where he is, and I wish we had all the other journalists in Paris under the same lock with him, and could keep them there to all eternity—that I do. But I tell you what, M. Louchard: If we release this man and throw him a bone, it must be an understood thing that his paper leaves off poking fun at me. It may laugh at my colleagues if it pleases—it's not my business to defend them—but it must respect me—and—and the Emperor," added M. Gribaud, after a moment's pause. "Do you understand, M. Louchard? If it doesn't, mind you, I'll make it unpleasant for M. de Tirecruchon. Is that all you have got to say?"

"I wished to speak to your Excellency about Monsieur Drydust," rejoined the commissary.

"Ah! Monsieur Drydust," echoed the Minister whose countenance at once changed and lost its stiffness. "We must be civil to him, M. Louchard. He is an ally. He writes in a paper read by a hundred thousand English shopkeepers, who'll believe what he tells them, as if it were in the Bible. We send him invitations to all the ministerial parties, and he inserts every thing we ask him. Such a man must be encouraged. If he makes any request of you, that is, within the bounds of feasibility, you must accede to it."

"He often comes to the Prefecture for information," answered M. Louchard; "and so I've been thinking we could serve him and ourselves at the same time, by furnishing him with a daily bulletin, summarizing all the intelligence the Government might desire to see propagated. We would have this bulletin drawn up in English by one of our British employés, who would add such

comments as we dictated to him. Gradually, Monsieur Drydust would find it the shortest way to forward our bulletin, purely and simply, to his paper; so that it will be like having a daily column in that journal at our disposal. One can insert a great deal in a column," added M. Louchard, by way of parenthesis.

M. Gribaud never fell into the bad habit of praising his subalterns, but, with a keen glance, he nodded approval.

"That reminds me I've Monsieur Drydust waiting in an ante-room all this while," said he. "Look in upon him as you go out, M. Louchard. Tell him that you will have a packet of special information ready for him every day. Mind you say *special information*. And, stay, I am so busy this morning I am really afraid I sha'n't have time to talk to him. Put him off politely — very politely; and give him some bit of confidential news. What shall it be? — Ay, this will do — and it's a good idea: Hint to him that you are on the scent of a conspiracy against the Emperor's life; mention it mysteriously, and he will be sure to make it public. Designate the chiefs of the Republican party as implicated; hint clearly at M. Horace Gerold, though don't specify him by name. Monsieur Drydust's imagination will do the rest, and his remarks will prepare the public mind, should we decide upon arresting and indicting these two Gerolds. Do that adroitly, M. Louchard; and now, good morning."

The commissary made a respectful obeisance, his eyes quavering, half with admiration, half with awe at the subtle spirit of the politician facing him. Then, his business being over, he departed.

It was now the turn of the other postulants. A few days before, on learning that M. Macrobe, of the *Crédit Parisien*, was in attendance, M. Gribaud would have had him introduced without a moment's delay. M. Macrobe was in favor then; but the part taken by him in the duel had entirely reversed the good dispositions of M. Gribaud — who, to mark his displeasure, resolved to let the financier wait until the whole list of visitors was exhausted — that is, possibly two hours. And no doubt he would have done so but for a circumstance altogether without precedent in ante-chamber annals; for scarcely had M. Louchard retired, than the venerable Bernard entered, and, with the look of a man hopelessly flustered by the audacity of the message he is commissioned to deliver, said: "Your Excellency, M. Macrobe has desired me to say that, having numerous calls on his time this day, he would be thankful if your Excellency could either see him immediately, or grant him an audi-

ence for some appointed hour on another day."

The venerable Bernard stood still, expecting, but prepared for a thunderclap.

The great M. Gribaud answered calmly "Show him in."

M. Macrobe was ushered in. He was attired in the black kid-gloves which constituted his gala costume; his brass-clasped note-book was peeping out of his breast-pocket; and at his button-hole glared, scarlet as a poppy, the ribbon of his Order. He was collected and impenetrable.

With perfect composure he made his bow, and, in a tone that struck surprise into the Minister, from its firmness, said: "Your Excellency must excuse me: my hours are not my own, but my shareholders'. Time was when I could have afforded to wait two hours in an ante-room, but this is no longer."

There was something very significant in this phrase. Thought the Minister to himself: "If this man is so impertinent, it is that he feels himself strong, and has allies with him more powerful than myself. Don't let us commit any blunder." And, like a prudent statesman as he was, instead of apostrophizing the financier in the hectoring tone he would certainly have adopted had the latter displayed any humility, he began quietly: "I desired to see you, M. Macrobe, to ask whether I had not been misinformed respecting the part you are said to have taken in the fatal duel of yesterday. It cannot surely be true that you, a man of order — a man on whom we rely — openly sided with a dangerous Democrat against a gentleman known to be a trusted partisan of ours?"

"I sided with M. Gerold because he was my friend," responded M. Macrobe calmly. "As for M. de Cosaque, or Panier, I am sorry he was a trusted partisan of your Excellency's, for it seems to me that the fewer of such hangers-on a respectable government tolerates, the better for its reputation in the eyes of honest people."

M. Gribaud's blood rose to his face, and he was on the point of giving a rough rejoinder; but, at the sight of M. Macrobe's impassive countenance, he controlled himself, and answered between his teeth: "I did not say a trusted partisan of *mine*, but of *ours*, by which I mean of the Government's and the Emperor's. You will probably allow that if his Majesty set store by M. de Cosaque, he had his reasons."

"I think we shall do better, perhaps, to come to an understanding, your Excellency," replied M. Macrobe, fixing his sharp eyes on the Minister's. "Whether his Majesty set store or not by M. de Cosaque, I am unaware; but in any case par-

sans of M. de Cosaque's kidney are not scarce in the market: the Government cannot as many of them as it pleases by offering them their price. There are other men, however, whose support it is not so easy to obtain — men of talent, rank, means, and popularity, whose co-operation would be an element of strength to the Government. I presume your Excellency would not object if I enlisted such a recruit as that for our ranks?"

"To whom are you alluding?" inquired the Minister, wondering, but still sullen.

"Your Excellency has doubtless heard that M. Horace Gerold, whom you have termed a dangerous Democrat, is heir to the ancient dukedom of Hautbourg, to a splendid estate conferring immense territorial influence, and to a moneyed fortune, which, by all accounts, must be considerable. M. Gerold is, besides, a man of talent, much esteemed by his party, and a little dreaded, if I mistake not, in Imperialist circles. What would your Excellency say if I brought this young man completely over to our party, if I induced him to assume his title, and to put both his landed influence and his own personal talents at the service of the Second Empire?"

It was now the turn of M. Gribaud to fix his eyes on his interlocutor.

"You think you shall be able to manage that, M. Macrobe?" he asked.

"I promise nothing," replied the financier; "but if the Government does not thwart me by heaping petty vexations on M. Gerold, I am confident of success."

"And you will bring Manuel Gerold and young Emile Gerold over too?" continued the Minister with a keen look.

"I cannot vouch for the younger brother: and to bring Manuel Gerold over would be impossible," answered M. Macrobe; "but Manuel Gerold is an old man, and in the course of nature must soon die. As to Emile Gerold, he is obstinate; but he will cease to be dangerous when his brother is with us — his party will never trust him."

"And of course for doing this you will require a reward?" observed the Minister, with more pungency than good taste.

"Naturally," rejoined the financier, with something of a sneer at the simplicity of the remark. "But I will ask for my reward at the fitting time and place. For the present, all I have to beg is, that your Excellency will see that M. Gerold is spared those flea-bite annoyances which will be likely to sour him without doing the Government any good — I mean domiciliary visits, frivolous prosecutions, personal attacks in the semi-official press, and such like. Then again, I would make so bold as to request that judicial authorities be enjoined to

evince more civility than they do at present. We have been before the Public Prosecutor this morning, and I assure your Excellency his tone was such as I was obliged to resent. He talked of the duel as a murder, which was at once ill-bred and unwise. A little civility never does any harm. It is a good saying that more flies have been caught with honey than with vinegar."

"Well, hark you, M. Macrobe," returned M. Gribaud, in the quick, matter-of-fact tone which was habitual to that statesman when he was striking a bargain with a person whose head he perceived to be as long as his own — "if you are working to bring young Gerold over to us, you shall not be meddled with — I promise you that much. Only, before disarming completely, we must have some sort of guarantee that you are not deluding yourself with false hopes. On what do you ground your expectations of success?"

"On the simple fact, that it is my interest to succeed," rejoined the financier, curtly; and this answer was so pregnant of confidence that it carried conviction with it. The Minister found nothing to reply, and the audience terminated. M. Macrobe, who had been kept standing all the while, retreated as he had come, with a slight bow, in which a little deference was mingled with a good deal of self-possession and no small dose of independence. M. Gribaud watched him go, and when the door had closed behind him, fell to rubbing one of his thick ears, thoughtfully, with a knotty forefinger, and muttered: "That fellow is a rogue to beware of. I wonder what his game is?" And, probably, speculations on this horny subject continued to harass the great Minister for the rest of the day: for M. de Beaufeuillet, the secretary, and the score of ambitious supplicants in the ante-rooms, soon had occasion to observe that his Excellency was in no better humor after his interview with M. Macrobe than he had been before it.

CHAPTER XVI.

MADEMOISELLE ANGÉLIQUE.

In proportion as the shares of the Crédit Parisien rose, and the position of its Chairman became more brilliant, the world began to ask itself, with some curiosity, who the daughter of that gentleman would marry. The question was not altogether without interest, for it was reported that Mlle. Angélique Macrobe would have ten million

francs to her portion: and there were rumors that no less a person than the Prince of Arcola sought the honor of obtaining her hand.

However that might be, the young lady herself was to be seen every day in the Bois de Boulogne, surrounded by a glittering cavalcade of suitors, who pranced on various qualities of hacks round her showy barouche, bowed down to their saddle-bows in offering her their homage, and sometimes went the length of pressing extremely tender billet-doux into her hand when they thought there was nobody looking. Of course Mlle. Angélique's aunt sat by to act as chaperon, but that excellent lady, who could never forget the time when she had cooked the boiled beef which formed the staple article of M. Macrobe's daily banquets in the days when he was a struggling man, thinking a good deal more about the pence than he did now about the pounds — Mlle. Dorothee was too much overawed by the dazzling presence of dukes and marquises to have any discernment left as to whether what these brilliant pretenders said and did was proper or not. When a handsome, lisping sprig of nobility bent over the carriage-door, she would muse in bewilderment how much that young man could spend a year for his yellow kid-gloves; and when some enterprising *roué*, seeing her mild inquiring glance fixed on him, fancied she was watching to see whether he pushed things too far with her niece, he would be completely out of his reckoning. The poor lady was simply wondering what his Sunday clothes could be like, since those he wore of a week-day were so fine.

As for Mademoiselle Angélique, she delighted, in her own inanimate way, in the life she was leading. To be dressed in light-blue silk and soft clouds of Valenciennes lace; to drive about in the barouche, and see people stare at her; to have a box at the Opera, another at the "Italiens," another at every theatre when there was a new performance on; all this was better than being at school under those provoking nuns, who taught one when Clovis the First ascended the throne, and when Clovis the Second descended from it. Then the gentlemen with the yellow gloves were amusing. They said funny things to make her laugh. That M. Gousset, for instance, called going to church the "baptism of new bonnets," and confession "clearing the conscience of its past sins in order to make room for those to come." The Prince of Arcola, to be sure, was a little grave: he didn't laugh so much. One of her school-friends had asked her whether it was true she was going to marry him. She didn't know; papa hadn't spoken to her about it. If

papa wished it, she should not mind. The Prince was always very kind to her, but she should like him to laugh a little more; it was more pleasant.

Every morning the butler of the Hôtel Macrobe brought in on a silver tray a whole pyramid of letters, burning acrostics, bouquets, and novels inscribed "with the author's compliments," all intended for Mademoiselle Angélique. The letters and acrostics were generally opened by M. Macrobe, and with the acrostics he seldom failed to light his cigar. The nose-gays were stuck in vases, and the novels were handed over to Mademoiselle Angélique to read, if she cared to do so, which she never did. There were dozens of them ranged very neatly on the bookshelves of her boudoir, with the leaves cut of course (by a footman), so that an author, if he should chance to call and take up his own work for curiosity's sake, should never discover that it had not been perused. Mademoiselle Angélique did not like reading. "You have no idea how much they made us read at school," she would tell you, with a pretty, rueful expression on her bewitching face. She preferred drawing tatched cottages on a piece of white paper with a blue pencil; and when she was tired of that, she had a large red and green macaw on a gilt perch, whom she could tease with a silver bodkin.

She was precisely engaged in this last amusing occupation, when M. Macrobe invaded her bower one fine autumn morning some weeks after Horace Gerold's duel. M. Macrobe was always brisk, whether he had any thing to say or not; but this time he *had* something to say.

At sight of her father, Mademoiselle Angélique abandoned the bird of gay plumage, and put up her face to be kissed.

"My pet, I have pleasant news for you," began the financier. "I mean to give a fancy dress and masked *déjeûner* in the country next month. I have hired a large villa and gardens for the express purpose. M. Girth, the *costumier*, will be here in an hour to show you designs for a costume — it must be a rich one. M. Gousset, whose taste is faultless, promised me to come and help me choose it. And — ahem! where is your aunt Dorothee? Ha, there you are, sister. You will have to choose yourself a costume too. Blanche de Castille, I should think, or Catherine de Medicis would do very well.

"Oh, dear me, Prosper, you can't be thinking of putting me into fancy dress!" was aunt Dorothee's scared exclamation.

"Why not? Stuff and nonsense! Everybody must be travestied. You'll wear a mask, too — a velvet one with lace."

"Holy Virgin!" cried the poor lady, piteously. "And shall I be obliged to show my legs, like those women at the play?"

"Your legs? No; what are you talking about? And don't say the play—it's provincial; say the theatre. Angélique, my pet, there will be no time to lose. As soon as you have chosen your dress, you must have it made up. I have called at Pochemolle's, and they'll send somebody over this morning to take orders for all the satin and velvet you may want. Girth will supply the needle-women. Ah, and he'll have plenty to do, preparing dresses for this breakfast. I intend it shall be a fête such as has never been seen within living memory. There'll be a ball after it; and fireworks—a twenty thousand francs' worth. But we'll have only two thousand invitations—people shall go down on their knees for tickets. I have my reasons for all this. Eh, eh, it will be a magic sight!"

"Oh, papa, how nice!" exclaimed Angélique, in obedient ecstasy; and she began to wonder whether her costume would be pink or blue.

"Twenty thousand francs of fireworks—two thousand invitations! Gracious mercy! where's all that money to come from?" ejaculated Aunt Dorothée, feebly staring at the chimney-piece.

But at that moment the butler opened the door and announced: "Monsieur Girth."

And the celebrated *costumier* was introduced.

He entered with grace, composed in his mien, irreproachable in his attire, easy in his salutation without being familiar. Behind him a satellite, with two immense folios, which were placed on the table. The strangest thing about Mr. Girth was that, holding the sceptre of fashion in the capital of fashion, he himself was a Briton born. You could pretty well guess this from his broad shoulders, light hair, and correctly-cut sandy whiskers.

"You keep good time, I see, M. Girth," said M. Macrobe, cheerfully.

"Punctuality is the politeness of tradesmen as of kings, sir," answered Mr. Girth, with a slightly foreign accent; "but I feared I was a few minutes behind my time, from having been delayed by the Duchess of Argenteuil—a wedding-dress for her Grace's daughter. I am also afraid I must hurry away in half an hour, to remit three dresses to a courier specially sent by the Empress of Austria."

Mr. Girth threw out these distinguished names without embarrassment, as if he had plenty more of the same grain ready to produce as occasion should serve him.

"Dear me," rejoined M. Macrobe. "I was in hopes you could have stayed until M. Arsène Gousset arrived to guide us in our choice. I expected him here by this time."

"Here is M. Gousset, papa," exclaimed Angélique.

And effectively that gentleman appeared, smiling and irreproachably dressed, coming up through the conservatory of camellias and ferns that adjoined Mademoiselle Angélique's boudoir.

He bowed to the two ladies, and shook hands with the financier. Mr. Girth made obeisance to him with a respectful inclination of the head.

"Well, Monsieur Girth, armed with your two manuals of elegance, I see. I have come to take a lesson in taste."

"Nay, sir. It is for M. Arsène Gousset to give, not to receive such lessons," answered the *costumier*, amiably.

"H'm! I don't know. I gave a description of a lady's dress in my last novel, and Madame de Masseline, one of your customers, told me I was at least six years behindhand with the fashions. I think she was right, for I lately saw, at one of the Embassies, a dress in which there was blue, green, yellow, and red, all mixed up together, somehow like in a Neapolitan ice. But they told me it was quite correct."

"May I ask at which of the Embassies, sir?"

"Your own: the English."

"Ah, yes; at the English Embassy they will do these kind of things," replied Mr. Girth, with a deprecatory shrug. "My countrywomen do not understand dressing, which is a pity, with their beauty. In England we have no middle class between those who don't dress and those who over-dress. Yet the science of costume is not difficult. Harmonize—there is the whole pith of it."

"Some pretty dresses here," murmured M. Gousset, turning over the leaves of the first album—"this one especially."

"Yes: a Francesca di Rimini, originally made for the Princess of Cleves. Her Serene Highness had been reading some Swedish romances, and desired to be costumed as 'Margaret Waldemar.' I had to use much diplomacy to persuade her Highness that she had neither the Northern complexion, nor the warrior-look necessary for the part. She had dark hair, and was sentimental. As 'Francesca di Rimini' she looked perfect. But that is the historical album. This is the fancy one, which will, perhaps, suit Mademoiselle better."

So the leaves of the fancy book were turned over, and nymphs, goddesses, water-

fairies, and cardinal virtues appeared in fascinating succession. At every page Angélique languidly exclaimed, "Oh!" and "Beautiful!" Aunt Dorothée, from hearing the prices called out, was quickly reduced to a state of intellectual coma, from which M. Gousset's suggested amendments—all of an expensive character—were not calculated to revive her.

The financier nodded his approval now and then, but deferred all practical decision to the novelist.

At last, by common consent, the choice was made to rest between a costume of Hebe and one of The Rising Morn.

"Something rich," hinted M. Macrobe.

"The Hebe would be simple," remarked the artistic Mr. Girth: "pearls, white silk and tulle, a little blue to give relief—perhaps a few flower-buds. The dress would not be more than twelve hundred francs. But I think the Hebe a little trite: I made three Hebes last winter season. The Rising Morn would be a much more imposing conception, and would harmonize exactly with Mademoiselle's rare beauty. Pale blue and white silk, with tulle as before, but arranged differently in diaphanous clouds, and the body much more *decolleté*; diamonds in profusion, to simulate dewdrops; gold powder in the hair—though, really, Mademoiselle scarcely needs it—and a tiara, with a rising sun in topazes and brilliants. To come up to my full idea in point of splendor, there should be a ten thousand guineas' worth of diamonds with this costume."

"Nothing to prevent it—nothing," answered M. Macrobe, enthusiastically.

"Well, if Mademoiselle decides on this costume, I think I can predict a success, especially by gaslight. It will be the finest thing seen since the 'Night' of the Duchess of Alba, though that was not finer."

Needless to say that Mademoiselle did decide upon that costume, and, hearing that the "person from M. Pochemolle's" had arrived, retired to give orders for all the quantities of silk and tulle which Mr. Girth was good enough to jot down on a paper.

The "person" had been shown into Mademoiselle's dressing-room.

Angélique hastened there, and found Georgette.

It should be mentioned that the two girls had been at school—or rather, at convent—together some years before.

Angélique's father was then less than nobody; Georgette's was a respectable well-to-do tradesman: it was, therefore, Georgette who held the upper rank. The parts were now reversed, and perhaps,

even in Angélique's naïvely serene temperament, lurked a spark of that good feeling which makes us so dearly low to patronize those who once have seen us lowly.

Anyhow she said, with a sweetly friendly smile: "O Georgette! they never told me it was you: I wonder why they didn't. Do you know, I've been choosing a dress—at least, M. Gousset did for me—which is to have ten thousand guineas' worth of diamonds on it? It's a great deal, ten thousand guineas, don't you think so? How much is a guinea, I forget?"

Georgette smiled—a little sad smile it was, for the poor child did not look in mirthful mood—and said: "Are these the orders on the paper, Mademoiselle Angélique?"

"Yes, those are the orders, Dear Georgette. Monsieur Girth wrote them; and he's going to send two needle-women to work every day; but I am to try on before him, and the last touches are to be made by his foreman. Yes, I think that's what he said. But it seems odd—doesn't it?—for a foreman to be sewing ladies' dresses? Ah, but I'm forgetting you—you'll take a glass of Madeira and some cake to please me. I am going to ring for it. Then I'll show you over the house: I think you've never seen it. It's very big: I don't fancy I know my way all over it by myself."

"No, Mademoiselle Angélique, thank you. Please don't ring," said Georgette. "I must be home soon; but thank you very much, all the same."

"Oh, dear! but you must take something," exclaimed Angélique.

Then stopping, and gazing with a perplexed, rather astonished air at her friend, she said: "But, Georgette, you don't look as you used to—you've been ill, haven't you? You're quite pale; why didn't you tell me?"

And with an impulsive movement not common with her, she seated herself on an ottoman, drew Georgette to her, and kissed her.

"Tell me what it is, dear?" she said.

Georgette's heart was in that full state when the least drop of sympathy caused it to overflow. She burst into tears.

Angélique was much astonished and distressed.

"Dear me, I wish Aunt Dorothée were here," she exclaimed. "I always go to her when I cry. But tell me, is it anything we can do for you? You were always good to me, you know, and you would never be sad if I could help it. I wish my head were better than it is; perhaps

might guess then without needing to ask you."

"No, no, it's nothing, Mdle. Angélique: will pass away soon.

And Georgette made an effort to dry her eyes.

But it was only an effort, and it failed: so that when Aunt Dorothée came up a few minutes afterwards to rejoin her niece she found the two young girls sobbing by each other's side—Georgette violently, Angélique helplessly and silently, from being unable to console her friend. The excellent woman was not long in adding her own tears to the group. But it was her mission in this life, poor soul, to boil beef and comfort the sorrowful: so after crying she gently pressed the afflicted girl to unburden her heart; and by degrees, by gentle questions, by dint of the confidence her kind worthy face inspired, she got at the truth. And that truth was the old, old story of a first love crossed. Georgette's father was bent upon marrying her against her will to a man she had never loved. He insisted upon it. Her mother, too, at first on her side, had ended by taking her father's, and they were importuning her so much that she knew she could not hold out longer. Besides, of what use was it to resist—she could never marry the man she loved? He would not have her; he was too high in the world, too much a gentleman to marry a poor girl like her. Yet she had once thought he loved her a little: it was an error. No, she would rather not tell his name. He had done nothing for which she could blame him. She would dry her tears and try to forget him. Well-meaning Georgette! this attempt was no more successful than the other. After drying her eyes she faltered again, and in this new gush of grief revealed that it was Horace Gerold she loved.

An hour later, when she was gone, Angélique, her eyes still red, stole down stairs to look for her father. She had a scheme on her mind. The financier was alone in her boudoir examining a landscape he had bought the day before, for about a third of its value, of a jaded artist. He was deliberating where he should hang this, for the walls were pretty well covered as it was with good pictures purchased adroitly. His back was turned to the door.

She touched his arm.

"O papa! I am so miserable, and I have come to ask you to do me a favor."

He laid down the picture a little surprised. This was the first time his daughter had ever asked him to do any thing.

"It's not for myself, papa, — at least, if

you do it, it will please me quite as much as if it were for me. It's for Georgette, you know, who was at school with me. She's been here this morning, and she says they want to marry her to a man she doesn't like. I think she said a commercial traveller. So I thought I'd come to you, though she told me not to do it, and ask you if something couldn't be done? If you spoke to her father, he would listen to you, and you might tell him — what she hasn't the courage to — that she loves a gentleman. I am not sure whether I ought to tell you his name — I mean this gentleman's — but I will. It's M. Horace Gerold, the same whom you know" —

M. Macrobe, whose face had remained at first impassive, underwent a sudden elongation of countenance at the mention of Horace Gerold. He kissed his daughter on the forehead and turned abruptly on his heel.

"That's queer," muttered he to himself. "I wonder what it means. I suppose there's no new unpleasantness under these cards. H'm! Horace Gerold is not the man to marry a girl of that rank, even if he were twenty times in love with her. I know that much of him. Still it's curious. Perhaps there may be a way of turning this new affair to account. I must think about it."

CHAPTER XVII.

"THE FUTURE MADAME FILOSELLE."

"HA, Gerold! how do you do? You have become quite a stranger here; but not for long, I hope?"

"Well, sir, my six months of disbaring will be over soon. Perhaps I shall practice again then."

"Quite right. The bar is the true career for talents fresh and vigorous like yours. By the way, how about your trial for that duel affair; are you committed?"

"I have just come from the *juge d'instruction's* closet. That is what brought me here this morning. But it seems I am to hear no more about the matter. I am discharged, as they say."*

"You owe that to your second, M. Macrobe, I suppose?"

* It is scarcely necessary to remind the reader that preliminary examinations are, in France, conducted *secretly*; and that the examining magistrate has unlimited discretionary powers.

"I think so. Perhaps a little, too, to the strength of my case. My antagonist was the aggressor. I acted in self-defence, and the jury could not but have acquitted me. The trial, however, would have afforded our counsel an opportunity for attacking the system of official journalism, and that I fancy would scarcely have suited the government. They had more interest in hushing up the affair than we had."

Horace was replying to the barrister Claude Febvre, in the great hall of the Palace of Justice, where, as his interlocutor observed, he had for some time past become a stranger. He was still on the staff of the "Sentinelle," but only waiting for the occasion to sever a connection which had ceased to be cordial, and which there appeared little likelihood of ever re-establishing on its old footing. Indeed, the breach with Nestor Roche was widening rather than otherwise. The editor's confidence in his contributor was shaken. He tried not to show it, but the fact was patent, revealing itself in a host of small symptoms, not the least significant of which was the unusual latitude he allowed Horace as regards his articles. He never altered these articles now; never ran his pen through this or that sentence, pointing out with his gruff voice and friendly look, why he thought it wise to do so. The articles were printed as they came; and it is only fair to add, that if the editor had ever been troubled with apprehensions lest his headstrong young friend should drag the paper into trouble, all fears on this account were now definitely appeased. The duel, or rather the gathering intimacy with M. Macrobe which followed that event, appeared to have marked a new era in Horace's opinions, or at least in his style. He now wrote temperately, with an absence of all acrimony, sometimes even with a courtesy of expression which made the rougher Republicans amongst his fellow-contributors quiver with astonishment. Not that he was less liberal; on the contrary, he was perhaps more so. But it was the easy, philosophical liberalism of the gentleman — the liberalism of the fortunate man who sees things through pink glasses, and begins to think that after all the world is not so black as it has been painted.

And how, indeed, could it be otherwise? Every day added some new sweets to Horace's life. His walks along the Boulevards resembled triumphal processions. Distinguished men saluted him; great novelists and journalists nodded amicably to him as one of their own set. Bonapartist writers gave him a wide berth. When he went to

the opera, he must have been blind not to notice that women turned their opera-glasses in his direction — often kept them so turned a long time — and then M. Arsène Goussot, or the Prince of Arcola, would come down and claim to introduce him to Madame la Comtesse This or That, who desired to make his acquaintance. As Mr. Dryden remarked, it was flattering. He knew what it was from having gone through it himself.

"Ah, *mon cher*," would add that eminent person, who was beginning to give him a good deal of his company, "take my word for it, extreme republicanism won't do. I've seen it act — went to America on purpose to study it. The Americans have no opera of their own, no theatre, no novels worth mentioning, no pictures. And depend upon it, these are the essentials of life."

"What are, novels or the opera?"

"Both. Liberty should be, not an end, but a means. You don't come into the world to put your vote into a ballot-box: you come to enjoy yourself. If you can't get the enjoyment without the vote, then agitate for the vote; but if you have the enjoyment, where is the use of voting?"

"You mean that despotism which gives you operas and museums is the *ne plus ultra* of good government?"

"Well, nearly. I adore despotism. Nothing great has ever been done without it. See this new Boulevard Malesherbes they are building; look at the Bois de Boulogne — two hundred million francs spent upon it within two years. Parliamentary government would never have done that for you."

"Then you must be very anxious to see the form of government in your own country changed."

"No; with England it is different. Freedom is necessary to the English temperament. We must have a great deal of freedom. But we are the exception."

Horace smiled; but these conversations, and a good many others of the kind, conducted by choice spirits like M. Goussot, were insensibly operating upon him. He laughed at the paradoxes he heard; would now and then take the trouble of refuting them; but like a man who has got into the habit of sipping absinthe, and, after finding his first glasses bitter, grows to like the acrid flavor: so now it rather amused him to hear the cynical witticisms of his new friends; and he more than once caught himself admitting — not aloud, but internally — that these agreeable fellows were much more genial company than the Re-

publicans pure he occasionally met. This was especially his train of thought on the morning he exchanged the few words in passing with the barrister, Claude Febvre. It was a clear, sunny day, his blood flowed prosperously in his veins, and the balminess of the air came as a welcome relief after an unusually gloomy hour or two passed the evening before in the society of some fervid Radicals. Never had these men — journalists and ex-politicians for the most part — shown themselves more iconoclastic and rabid. "Upon my word!" muttered Horace, as he descended the staircase of the Palace of Justice. "That may be liberalism, but if so, liberalism, like most other human inventions, would seem to be perfectible."

The streets were alive with that animation which buoyant weather begets. Cabs flitting by crossed each other with rapidity; on the tops of the omnibuses passengers talked and laughed; and the pink and yellow playbills on the kiosks gleamed singularly fresh and new. It was a day to be out and walking. Horace sauntered down the quays, stopping now and then to examine the curious collections of old prints and books exposed at the open-air stalls, which encumber the left bank of the Seine; but pausing more often to consider those wonderful pieces of rusty armor, those cracked plates of three-century-old china, and the jappaned bowls of rare antique coins exposed in the windows of the bric-a-brac shops. He had just spent a minute thus profitably, and was turning to resume his stroll, when a small active pedestrian, in a showy waistcoat and loaded with a carpet-bag, ran almost into him, apologizing in the same breath for his awkwardness, and laying the blame on the narrow pavement. Horace bowed and was passing on; but the other, as if struck by his face, stopped, reddened a little, raised his hat suddenly, and said: "I beg your pardon. I believe I have the honor of addressing the Marquis of Clairefontaine — M. Horace Gerold? Pardon the liberty," he resumed immediately, "but I feel myself under an obligation: I owe you a debt of thanks, and I am thankful to have the opportunity of repaying it. My name is Filoselle — Hector Filoselle, at your service."

"M. Filoselle — yes, perfectly; I remember;" and Horace began to contemplate this gentleman with some interest.

"Yes, I owe you a debt of gratitude, Monsieur le Marquis — that is, Monsieur," said M. Filoselle, who was quickly regaining his self-possession, "I am told you were good enough to employ your eloquence on

my behalf. M. Pochemolle, my future father-in-law, has informed me of the circumstance. My future mother-in-law, you are aware, was at first opposed to the match. I have seen many mothers-in-law both in France and abroad, and have had occasion to notice that they are always opposed to something. Marriage, Monsieur le Marquis, would be a sacred institution but for mothers-in-law; when I am wedded I propose to keep mine at a distance. Mlle. Georgette, my future wife, will, I have no doubt, subscribe to these views. Meanwhile, reciprocating my tender passion as she does, I am convinced that she entertains the same grateful feelings towards Monsieur as I myself."

Horace slightly bent his head without answering.

"I should have sought the opportunity of saying all this to Monsieur before; but the pursuit of business is engrossing; it has kept me away from Paris these last six weeks and will take me again into the country by the early train to-morrow. To amass money, M. le Marquis, with the intention of bestowing it on the object of one's worship, is an occupation which has always seemed to me the noblest of all; and this reminds me that if Monsieur should want a few dozen of champagne, light and dry, vintage of '49; or a flute — rosewood, with double silver stops, and a case to match, portable and convenient — he would find a profit in dealing with me preferably to with a retail house. I have another favor to ask, but this demand ought, perhaps, to be proffered by the future Madame Filoselle. However, if M. le Marquis would so far honor us as to be present at the ceremony, the date of which is not yet fixed, but shall be made known to M. le Marquis, he would be doing a gracious thing, for which he would be entitled to our sincerest thanks. Indeed, I may say, that by his presence M. le Marquis would be giving the final sanction to his own work; for if Hymen has happy days in store for me, I shall never be able to forget that it is to the Marquis of Clairefontaine that I owe it."

Was this true? Did Monsieur Filoselle owe his prospective connubial bliss to M. le Marquis? One might have doubted it on seeing the pre-occupied and not over-pleased look on Horace Gerold's features as he moved away after this chance encounter. Why did things turn up in this way? Horace had resolved that he would think no more about Georgette, and he had really tried not to do so. He had even done more; he had avoided all occasions of meeting her; and once when he was certain that she was not in the shop, he had entered, and resolutely undertaken a furious

long eulogy of M. Filoselle, whom he didn't know — all this with a view to mollifying M^{me}. Pochemolle: in which object he had ended by succeeding. It is true that after this achievement he had retired, not particularly satisfied that what he had done was feeling, or even honest. But he wished to put away temptation, and the end in such cases generally appears to justify the means. One thing, however, he had neglected to do, and that the simplest of all: Why had he not removed? He did not know himself. He reasoned that the thing was not necessary since Georgette herself would soon be married and gone. But now, hearing M. Filoselle talk, it occurred to him that he had been unwise. It would have certainly been better to remove. He could not stand this commercial fellow coming many times and thanking him like that.

He walked home out of humor. A regret that M. Filoselle's employers had not sent that gentleman to sell their wares in the antipodes floated uppermost in his mind. Then he anathematized M. Pochemolle and all French fathers collectively who made a traffic of marriage. He wondered how Georgette looked now? It was a long time since he had seen her. Yes, weeks. What had she been thinking of him during all this while? She was indignant, of course; that must inevitably be, for women never view these things in the proper light. Still, he should be sorry that she should retain a lastingly bad opinion of him. He had acted for the best. Where would be the harm if he stepped in just to say a few kind words and make peace? She was definitely another's now; the attention could not be misconstrued.

He had reached the Rue Ste. Geneviève. He entered.

M^{me}. Pochemolle was at her habitual place behind the counter. M. Pochemolle stood in the centre of the shop, receiving with respect a financial hint or two from M. Macrobe.

The latter accosted Horace, extending his hand.

"My dear young friend, I had called to tell you about this fancy fête of mine. It's got up mainly for you, you know."

Horace's eyes roamed round the shop in search of Georgette. She was seated in a corner, and over the counter, talking to her and smiling, leaned a gentleman, fashionably dressed. They seemed tolerably engrossed in their conversation. "And," thought Horace, with a sudden sharp pang at the heart, "their heads are very close together."

This pang was not lessened when the stranger, turning round, showed his face. It was the Prince of Arcola.

CHAPTER XVIII.

M. MACROBE AT "HOME."

M. MACROBE had determined that his fête should be a success; and, in so far as the preliminaries could augur, his wish appeared likely to be realized. M. de Tirecruchon, released from captivity, heralded the event in the "Gazette des Boulevards." Mr. Drydust talked of it to his British readers, giving them full statistics as to the number of wax-candles that would be burned, the *menu* of the supper, and the price of the champagne — nothing inferior to Cliquot, twelve shillings a bottle. Suburban Clapham rejoiced over the feast as if it were going to be present there: the semi-detached villas in Camberwell, Battersea, Islington, and Chelsea, conversed anxiously about the entertainment during a fortnight beforehand.

But it was naturally in Paris that the coming revelry caused most sensation. The windows of the drapers' shops along the whole length of the Boulevards and the Rue de la Paix, bloomed out with flashing satins and rich-hued velvets, festoons of gold and silver lace, superb plumes, and countless stage accessories, amongst which, skilfully interspersed to catch the eye, shone gaudy designs of fancy dresses — mediæval queens and Hungarian peasant-girls, legendary amazons and modern *vivandières*. Monsieur Louis, "Artiste Capillaire to the Court" (hairdresser, as we say in English), had got his "list" full — which meant that on the day of the fête he would start on his artisticocapillary rounds at six sharp, in the morning, and terminate his labors towards midnight. Lucky the ladies who, for a hundred francs' fee, could obtain a quarter of an hour of this gifted being's time! He drove up to the door in his brougham, raced up to Madame's dressing-room three steps at a time, expected to find Madame ready-seated before her toilet-glass, the maids in attendance, the combs, brushes, curling-tongs, and pots of *bandoline*, all in a row within hand reach; and even then he would glare like a gladiator and stamp his autocratic foot if the maid was stupid — took a quarter of a minute, for instance, getting Madame's tiara out of the jewel-case, or in her hurry dropped a hair-pin. As for Mr. Girth, he was, of course, run off his legs.

There were no bounds, he would say to the exigencies of ladies. If he called upon all who wrote to him he should never have a spare minute at his command. So he was really obliged to establish a rule. He would be at home at stated hours; other stated hours he would confine to calls; but his patronesses must please to understand

that on no account could he ever devote more than half an hour to one consultation. It is not certain whether his patronesses understood this or not. Anyhow, their broughams extended in a three-hundred-yards queue outside his door, and ladies who would not have waited five minutes to please their lawful husbands, sat, with the patience of saints, their two and four hours at a time, to bide the good pleasure of Mr. Girth. Perhaps the only lady who, previous to the fête, was not called upon to undergo some ordeal of the kind was Mademoiselle Angélique.

As daughter of the host, she was entitled to exceptional regard. Mr. Girth did himself the honor of waiting upon her personally once or twice a week, and she, apprised beforehand of his coming, awaited it with meditative anxiety, as we do the Doctor, or an R. A. who is coming to paint us. It was a scene not devoid of grandeur. Mademoiselle Angélique, attired in the as yet unfinished costume, stood motionless, with a cheval-glass to the right, another to the left, and a third in the background. Behind, but out of the line of sight, two attendant needle-women and a maid, silent and awestruck. On a sofa Mademoiselle Dorothee casting glances of resignation at the ceiling; and in the foreground, Mr. Girth, gloved, meditating and impassive: throwing out curt orders to an aid-de-camp foreman who deferentially consigned them to a notebook. Michael Angelo superintending the works of the cupola of St. Peter's; Lenôtre, planning the royal gardens of Versailles, were not more great and admirable.

To say that Angélique took pleasure in all this would be true, and yet her joy was not quite unalloyed. Her rich dress and the approaching fête were perplexing her a little. No doubt it was satisfactory to be informed that she would be queen of a pageant unsurpassed in splendor and unsurpassable; and to see the pretty eyes of her lady friends twinkle jealously as they examined her costume, and the ten thousand guineas' worth of diamonds to be tacked thereon, was a sensation of which any lady, however good at heart, will easily understand the sweets. But underlying these gratifying impressions, lurked a vague presentiment that this unusually brilliant festival had not been projected without some object in view — M. Macrobe, she knew, was not the man to invest twenty thousand francs in fireworks for the pleasure of watching colored sparks fall — and somehow Angélique began to fancy that with her father's object, whatever it was, she herself might not be altogether dissociated. It must be confessed that her perspicacity scarcely went deeper than this. She thought, in-

deed, a little of the Prince of Arcola, wondered why, if he really intended marrying her, he did not propose sooner; but she was at a long way from guessing the truth, when the financier repeated to her for the fourth or fifth time:

"My pet, you must mind and be very civil to M. Horace Gerold, who will be present at the fête. You will find him a most amiable young man."

"Certainly," thought she, "I will be civil to M. Gerold," and she was very glad at having the opportunity of meeting him. As to his being an amiable young man, her father knew best, but it was not exceedingly amiable to act as he had done by Georgette. It is true that he was a rich and high-born gentleman, so they pretended, and that Georgette was a tradesman's daughter; but after all what did that matter? Had she not heard M. Gousset say often that a woman's rank was her beauty, that King Coph — Cophet-something had married a beggar-maid, and that he had done quite right, for that the party honored by this transaction was not the beggar-maid, but King Coph — himself — why then should not M. Gerold do as much? Georgette was not a beggar-maid: at school she used to carry off prizes which she — Angélique — could never manage to do; and she was pretty — oh, yes! prettier far than any girl she had ever seen. Everybody declared so; even the Prince of Arcola, who had been to Pochemolle the other day with her father, had come back quite enthusiastic about the young girl's beauty.

She wondered, in her mild, meek way, whether she could not try something to soften M. Gerold — he did not look like a very hard young man, and she was truly anxious to befriend Georgette. If her father had done what she wanted, the whole thing might no doubt have been settled by this time; but her father did not seem pleased at her interfering in the matter. He had kissed her quite abruptly and gone away, and the next time she had appealed to him, he had answered, impatiently: "Tut, tut, my pet, Georgette is a little goose, and you too."

She could not see why Georgette was a goose, though she had deliberated upon the matter gravely. It was not being a goose to cry because one had been jilted. Aunt Dorothee said it was a shame for gentlemen to steal away the hearts of young girls, that it was much more cruel and dishonorable than robbing money. Then Georgette was so gentle, too! "Yes," thought Angélique, "I will try whether I cannot work upon M. Gerold's good feelings. I will take advantage of his presence at the fête to speak to him." This wise idea, which

occurred to her after many days of reflection, she kept to herself; but every day the idea twined itself more tightly, like a strong shoot of ivy, round her usually inert imagination. Meanwhile, on the prettiest sheet of toned paper in the world, and with the tiniest gold pen extracted from a liliputian desk, she wrote to her friend "*not to be miserable*," drawing three lines under the word miserable, which, as connoisseurs in ladies' calligraphy are aware, means that there are three excellent reasons, if not more, why one should not be miserable. She added that she had got a plan for "*setting every thing right*," — words underlined as before.

It is probable that if M. Macrobe had intercepted this affectionate communication on its way to the post, and taken cognizance of its contents, he would have frowned, and with considerable vexation. But he was too busy now to see much of his daughter. Every spare hour he could snatch from business he spent at Marly in the villa he had hired, a noble residence with a beautiful park, in which a whole army of workmen were employed, erecting marquees, extemporizing terraces, and laying out parterres of costly flowers. Nothing was to be wanting to the completeness of the fête. In case of rain there were arrangements for covering in the entire grounds. Châlets, bright with paint and gilding, verdant with creeping foliage, had been run up here and there, and furnished with a luxury that could not have been excelled, had these ephemeral dwellings been destined to last permanently. To keep the grounds and line the approaches to the ball-rooms, a hundred men, attired as halberdiers, had been retained; and two hundred boys, dressed as pages of Francis the First, and selected for their comely looks, were to officiate as waiters. This part of the arrangements had been effected by a celebrated theatrical manager, expert in *mise en scène*; and the same enterprising genius had suggested that a hundred of the prettiest girls amongst the metropolitan *corps-de-ballet* should be recruited to act as *bouquetières*, and distribute to the guests flowers and bonbons. The programme might be altered according to circumstance, but for the present it was as follows: At four, the *déjeuner*; at six, the drawing of a tombola with valuable prizes; at ten, fireworks; after which the grounds were to be illuminated with an invention, then in its infancy, called "electric light;" masks were to be put on; and there was to be a ball, with supper and cotillon, lasting — until it pleased Heaven to make the sun rise.

Small wonder that M. Macrobe was busy. He had long ago been obliged to relent from his original decision of only issuing two thousand invitations. No half-dozen post-

bags could have contained all the letters he received, cajoling, begging, entreating, raving for tickets. What made it difficult to refuse, too, was that there were a good many shareholders of the *Crédit Parisien* amongst the supplicants. These honest and importunate persons claimed the favor of an invitation as a sort of right, and they were delighted to hear of the fête, for it is evident that a chairman who has so much money to spend must be looking very closely after the interests of his shareholders. In fine, M. Macrobe had been obliged to increase the tickets to four thousand, without thereby greatly diminishing the number of those who in private declared they were being shamefully ill-used, and in public that they had never solicited invitations, not they, and that they certainly should not have gone to the party even if they had been asked. But M. Macrobe could afford to make light of these fox and grapes rancors. The essential point in his eyes was that all the personages of importance whom he had invited had accepted with alacrity, and that Horace Gerold — the most important of any — had, with perfect good-nature, entered into the spirit of the thing, and promised to come in costume. "So that's all right," muttered the financier; "and I think this seed-corn we are scattering will soon begin to fructify — barring accidents," added this prudent gentleman, who, in his calculations, always left a wide margin for contingencies.

At last the long-looked-for day of the fête arrived.

The evening before, Horace had attempted, without success, to induce his brother to accompany him. Emile had refused firmly but gently; alleging no reason, however, save the somewhat indefinite one, that he should probably be busy. Horace had hired for three hundred francs a magnificent costume in the fashion prevailing under Henry II. (of France). It was white satin slashed with *cérisé*; a short mantle of white velvet profusely embroidered with silver fell over the shoulders, a silver-hilted sword in *cérisé-velvet* sheath hung by his side, and a flat bonnet with white plumes fastened with an aigrette of diamonds adorned the head. Now, it may be weakness, but when we have attired ourselves in a garb of this sort, and are surprised by a friend contemplating ourselves in a glass, we expect to be complimented on our appearance, otherwise we look foolish. Horace felt so when Emile, entering unexpectedly, just as he had put on a pair of red-heeled shoes, and was watching the effect of them, said gravely: "Oh! I beg your pardon, I see you are engaged."

"Engaged! no," exclaimed Horace, red-

dening with some confusion. "Come in, man, what is it you want to say?"

"I was going to write to Brussels to-day. Have you any message I can send?"

"My love, of course. But what are you going to write about?" asked Horace, wishing he had got his black coat and trousers on instead of these silk stockings and this sword.

"Well, you know, I received a letter yesterday:—and, by the way, what am I to answer about the passage that concerns you?"

Horace sat down on his bed and played moodily with his bonnet.

"How am I to say?" answered he in a vexed tone. "The whole thing is absurd and calumnious. Some of those Republicans of Brussels have been telling my father that they hear I am keeping loose company, and am turning renegade; and he feels pained. Tell him it is not true; and you might add that it is only Republicans who would be capable of inventing such trash; for I am sure I begin to think with Jean Kerjou, that we shouldn't be happy in our party if we didn't perpetually accuse one another of treachery."

"And what am I to say about M. Macrobe?" proceeded Emile quietly.

"M. Macrobe is my friend," replied Horace in an impatient voice. "I've told you so already, and think you might spare me the trouble of repeating it. Write to my father that he is misinformed about the man. Thank God, our father is not cut out of the same wood as his brother Republicans; he has the soul of a gentleman, is just and generous. He can require nothing more when I say that I answer for M. Macrobe's honor on my own."

"On your own honor, brother?" answered Emile doubtfully. "You are not surely in earnest; for if you really went bail for this man's honor, Horace, how could I hold out any longer? You cannot think that I would continue to suspect the man if I thought you convinced of his honesty."

"But why do you suspect him?" rejoined Horace with irritation. "What is the meaning of this mania of yours for suspecting people, you who used to be such a good fellow, and never spoke ill of a fly? It seems to me that it is you who are being spoiled by bad company—that of those envious, bilious demagogues whom they tell me you frequent. What has M. Macrobe done to you, come, tell me that; and what has he done to me? Why, since I have come across his path he has done nothing but repay me good for evil—had he been Job himself he could not have evinced more longanimity. I begin by vilifying him in a court of justice—he holds out

his hand to me and asks me to dinner; I cut him—he takes my part when I am publicly insulted, and risks imprisonment by abetting me in a duel; he knows I am a Republican, that is a foe to his party, and he good-naturedly asks my advice about distributing twenty thousand francs to the people of our clique who may have suffered during the revolutions. Frankly, what can be his object? I am no great man that he should have any interest in currying favor with me. I am a poor devil without fortune or title, with only a rag of popularity at my back, which a day has made and which a day may take away. M. Macrobe, on the contrary, is a millionaire with more power than a cabinet minister. It would be both presumptuous and arrogant to pretend that there can be anything else but condescension on his part in treating me in the way he does."

The blood rose to Emile's habitually pale face.

"Well, Horace, this is the last time I shall ever speak about M. Macrobe, then," said he, with the slight hectic cough which excitement of any kind generally brought on. "I will not promise to like the man," added he with an effort. "But your good word is a passport—to, at least, my respect. For your sake I will try to forget what I have heard and believed about M. Macrobe."

And he held out his hand—a white, thin hand it was, and feverish.

"Why won't you go to this fête with me?" asked Horace, still dogged.

"No: don't ask me to do that," pleaded Emile, shaking his head. "To begin with, I should not make a very lively guest; and I hardly think I could afford the expense. Besides, you see it is too late now. I fancy this is the concierge come to tell you that your carriage is waiting."

It was no longer Georgette who run up on these sorts of errands now. The concierge, cap in hand, informed "Monsieur" that a gentleman in a landau with postillions was down below, "dressed like in carnival time." The person meant was the Prince of Arcola, who had arranged to call for Horace and give him a lift. Horace put on his glittering bonnet, wrapped himself in a flowing cloak of white cashmere and descended.

Never since the days of the Grand Monarque, when high court and revelry were held there, had the shady groves of Marly resounded with the echoes of such a festival. It was an event to be remembered evermore by the inhabitants, and to be narrated some eighty years hence by the youngest of them as a reminiscence of how men lived and caroused under the notorious Second Em-

pire. A troop of mounted municipal guards, their steel helmets and breastplates flashing in the sun of a cloudless sky, had been lent by the Prefect of the Seine to act as guard of honor. Picked men, with flowing mustaches, slung carbines, and clinking sabres, they swept up the Grand Avenue at a fast trot half-an-hour in advance of the first carriages; then, having reached their destination, turned and separated—half forming themselves into a glittering semicircle round the park gates, the others starting off by two's to occupy strategical points down the road, and silently point the way to doubting coachmen. Simultaneously a hundred members of the Parisian police took up their position at equidistant spaces of twenty yards on either footway to keep back the curious, and see that the stream of vehicles flowed by uninterrupted. Magnificent policemen these, with cocked hats, straight swords, white gloves, folded arms—men you would have taken for officers in any other country. Then the carriages began to appear, first singly, then two or three almost abreast, as if racing; then one after another, settling gradually into a gorgeous slow-moving procession that seemed never to end, tapering and glimmering far into the distance, out of the reach of sight, like the trail of a starry meteor. The harness of the horses jingled, the hoofs of the noble animals pawed the ground impatiently, large flakes of foam dropped from the furbished bits, coronet after coronet, 'scutcheon after 'scutcheon flashed by on shining panels, and, every now and then, down the whole line there would be that ten minutes' dead stop, which acts on the nerves of fair occupants of broughams, and evokes from the powdered gentlemen on the box such doleful replies as this: "Impossible to move faster, Madame la Marquise; there are more than two hundred carriages ahead of us."

But if the scene without was sufficiently imposing, what language can be used to paint the spectacle within the grounds? Such a sight needs more than a pen. Tents of purple vellum and gold, gilt awnings ablaze with silken streamers; squads of radiant girls with pyramids of flowers piled up in vase-like baskets. On plats of emerald grass, and under the spreading shade of giant oaks, rich carpets and velvet cushions spread out to invite repose; and trenching on the marble whiteness of terraces, the drooping folds of blue, scarlet, and orange draperies. If any thing, the eye had too much of color, and turned with relief to the cool fountains, which threw up their waters in columns of spray, and splashed so musically in the round deep basins. Fair forms leaned over these basins, dipped their hands in, and filled the air with tink-

ling laughter. And these silvery sounds formed a melodious interlude to the strains that issued from the open orchestra pavilions, around which eddied and flowed a festive crowd revelling in garbs of every variety of fashion, richness, and tint.

"Upon my word it seems to be a success," said the Prince of Arcola to his companion as they passed together into a sumptuous reception-marquee where a master of the ceremonies, who looked cut out of a picture by Titian, took their cards.

The master of the ceremonies bowed low before them, and two pages in green and gold stepping forward, relieved the one of his white cashmere cloak, the other of a blue roquelaure that concealed a costume in violet velvet, of the time of Henri IV.

CHAPTER XIX.

YOUNG CANDOR, OLD SUBTLETY.

"Now here you are, that's right, and I am going to tell you who all the people are," cried Mr. Drydust, laying hold of Horace's arm as soon as he caught sight of him.

Mr. Drydust figured as a Scottish chieftain, presumably Rob Roy, and his intelligent brow disappeared under a bonnet of warlike dimensions. But he was none the less affable. Slightly embarrassed by a giant claymore from the hilt of which he was afraid to trust his left hand very far, his pace was perhaps less rapid than usual, but he still made excellent play with the hand remaining to him, and waved it about gracefully and easily to give effect to all he said: "Now see," said he; "this is true ease—the ease of an age when men understood costume, and fashioned it so as to give free play to all the limbs. I always feel fettered when I wear a frock coat—pardon, Madame" (Mr. Drydust had tripped up over his claymore), "but in this, one is at home. Aha, there is my friend Catfeesh Pasha; I'll introduce you. I declare this is like the Corso of Rome in Easter week; one meets everybody one knows."

So one did. All Paris was present. Not in truth the Paris which eminent foreigners would have comprehended in that title. One might have searched the whole grounds through without finding a single one of the men whose presence here below will be remembered a hundred years hence. But the Paris of the Second Empire was there, a throng of senators, ministers, deputies, stock-jobbers, patchouli-novelists, eau-de-rose journalists, and the gayer spirits of the

Corps Diplomatique, all in short who would consent to clothe themselves in the garb of departed centuries, and stalk about thus clothed for the amusement of the community. M. Macrobe had allowed of no exceptions in this respect: modern attire had been pitilessly excluded, and Horace met, within a space of five minutes, a cabinet minister dressed as a Turk, a councillor of state habited as a Jew peddler, and an envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary disporting himself very successfully as a Cochin-China fowl.

In these sorts of things it is highly essential that the guests should not be thrown too much upon their own resources, but that there should be a few sportive minds, to leaven the lump, play the fool a little, and keep the merriment from flagging. M. Arsène Gousset had undertaken this part. He was the presiding genius of the fête. Assisted by M. de Tirecruchon, some young journalists, and three or four artists, he darted about from group to group organizing quadrille parties, introducing people one to another, and seeing that there was an endless flow of champagne. He had also composed a jocular "Gazette des Masques," which, printed in gold on white satin, was distributed broadcast by him and his acolytes with piping cries such as news-venders utter.

Horace would have been glad to sit down somewhere, whence he could have seen without being himself observed; but this would not have tallied with the plan of his host, which was to make him an actor in, not a mere spectator of, the pageant. M. Macrobe had instructed swift messengers to bring him immediate intelligence of Horace's arrival, and the latter had scarcely had time to accustom his eyes to the novel show around him, when the financier, transformed into a Jacques Ango (famous merchant of Dieppe who threatened to make war upon Portugal at his own cost, in the reign of Francis I.), accosted, welcomed, and drew him away with Mr. Drydust to the *déjeuner* tent.

There Mademoiselle Angélique was holding her court, amidst a dense circle of worshippers, transfixed with admiration. Flattering murmurs circulated on all hands: Horace himself was fairly dazzled. Certes, the great M. Girth had triumphed. Nothing could have been more beautiful, more enchanting, than this young girl of angelic loveliness, dressed in the graceful disguise of the Rising Sun. Her round white arms were bare, except where glittering bands of jewels encircled them, her rich hair fell in golden cascades over her snowy shoulders, the sun of brilliants that crowned her fair brow blazed like the fiery orb it repre-

sented, and the child herself, intoxicated by the incense of praise, enlivened by the music, the wine, the festivity, the compliments, glowed with an animation which heightened her beauty a hundred-fold.

"You must cater for my daughter," said M. Macrobe, leading Horace forward, and introducing him.

And, noting the ill-concealed look of envy on the countenances of some of the suitors he was then ousting, Horace could not avoid the reflection that, perhaps, indeed he was a man to be envied.

The tent was rapidly filling, for the signal had gone forth that the *déjeuner* was served, and fancy costume is no deterrent to appetite.

Horace led Angélique to one of the numerous tables spread in view of this tardy luncheon or early dinner. He was more or less the cynosure of a group of ladies, not indisposed to flirt with him on the strength of his reputation as a "lion;" but his matchless partner engrossed him, and she, to reward his assiduities, smiled, talked, and occasionally fixed her eyes upon his with a curious expression at once pleased and confiding, which, devoid of fatuity as he was, sent the blood to his head, and caused his heart to palpitate.

M. Macrobe, from whose watchful glance none of these signs, however slight, escaped, smiled to himself with contentment. He was standing with the Prince of Arcola.

"Well, mon prince," he said, "have you forgiven me for taking you to see that pearl of price—that bewitching Mademoiselle Georgette—the other day? I remember you said it was doing an ill-service to show you a face that would inevitably remain fixed in your memory, and, perhaps, trouble your peace."

"Did I say that?" replied the Prince, with an embarrassed laugh. One says those things you know, without meaning them. A handsome statue, a striking picture, creates an impression which one at first thinks lasting, but which wears off."

"To be sure. But Mademoiselle Georgette is a very striking picture;—at least, I know of some one who was considerably smitten in that quarter."

"Who?" asked the Prince, quickly; not noticing that, at this vivacity, which somewhat belied his previous indifference, M. Macrobe's eyelids slightly twinkled.

"That would be telling tales out of school," laughed the financier. "Still, mon prince, as a secret between you and me, the admirer was young Gerold. You know he lives in the same house as this handsome statue."

The Prince changed color a little. It

did not look as though the news much pleased him.

M. Macrobe, to repair matters, took his arm, and presented him to the fascinating daughter of an American citizen, Cincinnati Jickling, Esq., whose ambition was to crown a long career of democracy and drysalting by allying himself to some one with a title. Mr. Jickling was stirred to the depths of his republican heart on seeing Miss Jickling escorted to the breakfast-table by an authentic prince.

Amidst the popping of champagne-corks, the clattering of plate, the running to and fro of sprightly pages, carrying silver trays loaded with choice viands or eccentric-shaped flagons, Horace pursued his attentions to Angélique. When the banqueting was at length over, she accepted his arm, and they issued on to the lawn.

"How refreshing the air is!" she said. "But we must sit down—or shall we go to one of those chalets? They look so nice and cool."

So they turned their steps towards the chalets, which were deserted—the stream of wassailers being directed towards another part of the grounds, where the Tombola was to be drawn.

M. Macrobe, who saw them walk alone, was careful not to disturb them. He had now mated himself with an English dowager—the Lady Margate—who had seen the Eglinton tournament, and was regaling him with her recollections of that historic event. He led off her ladyship, and charmed her with his good-humor, his perfect manners, and admirably-genial deference. "A most becoming Frenchman," was her ladyship's unuttered verdict. Yet, if M. Macrobe could have divined the motives of his daughter for enticing Horace to the chalet, it is not so sure that Lady Margate would have been captivated by his demeanor. It is probable that he might have earned the reputation of being a very distraught and ill-tempered Frenchman.

As we have said, Angélique had come to the resolution that she would help George. This was the first time in her life that the idea of helping any one—or even the possibility of doing so—had ever occurred to her; but, from the very fact of its novelty, the determination had taken firm hold of all her faculties, absorbing her energies, and monopolizing her thoughts. There are no resolutions so deep as those which have been a long time taking root. She had turned the matter over waking, dreamed of it sleeping, and ultimately had resolved that, cost what it might, she would do such and such a thing on a certain day.

As we must never make men and women braver than they are, perhaps one ought to

own that, at the moment of putting her scheme into execution, she was not a little emboldened by the two or three glasses of Madame Veuve Clicquot's vintage which she had sipped. Anyhow, they were no sooner seated than, with the amazing courage of innocence and inexperience, looking up into Horace's face, she said:

"I am sure you must be very good."

"Good?" replied he, disconcerted.

"Are men ever good?"

"Yes, I think you are. I have heard gentlemen speak about you: they said that, though rich, you were a friend of the poor, and gave all your money to them. It seems to me that if I were a man I should like to be like that. I see many gentlemen who pass their lives in trying to amuse themselves: they do not appear to me so happy as you. Only, if I were a man, and anybody loved me I think I should perceive it, and I should not despise the love; for, you see, we women have nothing to give but our hearts, and when we have bestowed that, if we do not get another heart in return, our lives are dark and miserable ever after."

Horace sat, not knowing what could be the meaning of this. Was it a declaration? He felt what is called queer. The incomparable beauty of the girl who was addressing him, the solitude, the strangeness of the situation, all combined to form one of those passes in which precipitate men do foolish things. Luckily his emotion deprived him for the moment of utterance, and thus saved him from ridicule.

"You look astonished," pursued Angélique artlessly; "but what I say is true. Men are strong, and should have pity on the weak. A woman's love may not be much in the estimation of a man, but if they only knew what tears and suffering it costs, I think they would be too generous to leave it unrequited. I know people say that marriages should be between persons of the same rank and having like fortunes: but do you really think this is the only way to become happy? Is affection quite worthless, unless it have armorial bearings on it like one's dinner-spoons?"

Altogether on the wrong tack, and growing much more excited than was prudent, Horace seized Angélique's hand.

"Can you suppose," he said gallantly, "that any sordid considerations would stand in the way of my marrying a woman who gave me her heart?"

She abandoned her hand to him without mistrust; but in a tone of wondering remonstrance; "Then why do you not marry George?" she asked.

"George?" he exclaimed, suddenly releasing her hand.

"Why, yes: of whom else could I be speaking?" replied she simply. "I learned our secret, at least,—it would be truer to say that my aunt and I wrung it from poor Georgette, for she would never have told it us of her own accord. But she is very unhappy, Monsieur Gerold, believe me—so unhappy that I thought I would tell you this, for I said to myself: 'It is impossible M. Gerold can be aware of the pain he is causing.' Georgette is my old school-friend, you know; we were at the convent together; and she was a much better and cleverer girl than I;—oh, yes!—and there is not a nobleman in the world but might marry her without derogating."

The position was perplexing. A man always plays a rather silly part if he has been supposing without reason that a woman is making love to him. Horace felt neither more nor less abashed than most men feel under such circumstances. Yet Angélique, in pleading for her friend, was so naïvely eloquent, her voice bore the accent of so much womanly kindness, that he was touched. Had her design been to win him to herself, by a comedy adroitly played, she could not have succeeded more completely. Perceiving that she had not been thinking in the least about him, he began, with man's unfailing instinct, to think about her.

He hesitated a moment; then, drinking in her truly uncommon beauty with his eyes, he said, "Mademoiselle, my conduct has been misrepresented if you have been told that I have trifled with the affections of the young lady you mention. Had I loved, there are no considerations of rank or fortune that would have dissuaded me from marriage. But to marry without love, or with love existing only on one side, would be folly; and I assure you that until this day my heart was free. "Yes," added he, becoming quite serious, whilst his voice grew more impassioned, "until I came here two hours ago, I never knew what love was. The aims of my life were selfish: they tended to my own advancement only, and I had never contemplated associating any woman with my destiny. But from this day"—and he fixed his eyes with an intent gaze on her—"I have a new ambition,—one that will blend itself with and sanctify all my other aspirations—and this ambition it is you alone that will have the power to fulfil."

He rose, looking at her with a new glance full of love and meaning; and before she, in her surprise and distress, had found a word to say, he was gone.

Whilst this was taking place in the *châlet*, the world was enjoying itself at the drawing of the tombola, and Mr. Drydust

was explaining to the Austrian ambassador wherein this tombola, which was a plain lottery, differed from the Italian tombolas—an exposition to which her Excellency listened with as much good nature as though her husband had never been civil governor of Milan, and specially occupied during ten years of his life in superintending the Austro-Lombard lotteries. At every moment there was enthusiasm and clapping of hands, as a spirited lady, perched aloft on a platform and turning a wheel-of-fortune, drew out a ticket and proclaimed a prize; which M. Gousset (capital make-up as a court-buffoon), or one of his staff, instantly fetched from behind a curtain and handed with compliments to the owner of the winning number. As a general rule, these lotteries are not a boon. One gets pen-wipers which one doesn't want, or paper-cutters which embarrass one the whole evening; but M. Macrobe had ordained this on the same grand scale as the other arrangements. He had simply invested five thousand guineas in jewellery, and not the least pleasing feature of his triumph was the amazement of his lady-guests, who, examining the lockets or brooches they had drawn, discovered them to be real gold! The sharpest of money-men find it difficult to steer clear of snobishness.

But amidst this riot and jubilation a slinking somebody, draped in a Venetian cloak and wearing a black mask, was wandering about looking for the host. As the day was waning, and it was part of the programme that masks should be assumed at dusk, the Venetian-cloaked gentleman soon found his example followed, which appeared to make his researches more difficult, for he more than once stopped and fixed on the wrong man, interrogating him first, and then apologizing. At last he lit upon M. Macrobe, who had just watched his daughter and Horace leave the *châlet* at a few minutes' interval, both flushed and pensive, and was quietly radiant.

"M. Macrobe," said the mask. "I thought I should never find you."

M. Macrobe started at the voice.

"Is it possible—can it be your Excellency?" he exclaimed. "This is an honor I dared not have counted on."

"Well, well," muttered M. Gribaud—for it was he—"my wife and my daughter were here; you had been good enough—hem—to send them an invitation, so I thought I would just come in like this." He glanced deprecatingly at the cloak that covered his legs, and gave a slight shrug.

"Your Excellency could not have conferred a greater favor—but let me lead you

to the refreshment tent—you must be exhausted."

"No, no, thank you! By the way, if you have a mask, too, it might be as well to put it on; we shall be the less noticed."

M. Macrobe was not sorry to cover his face. Interviews with Monsieur the Minister Gribaud were often severe tests to physiognomical impassiveness. He knew his Excellency well enough to be certain that this unexpected visit was no mere act of amiability, but must have some business motive at the bottom of it.

"I have come because I had something to say on a matter that concerns us both," began the statesman, leading the way to a retired avenue. "You are still getting on well with young Gerold?"

"Your Excellency can see him yonder," answered M. Macrobe, turning. "There to the left, in the *cérise* and white, talking to a lady—M^{me}. de Margauld."

"Yes, I see him. Humph! how the boy has grown since I knew him. Well, M. Macrobe, you remember the conversation we had some time ago about this young man?"—

"Assuredly; and your Excellency must have noticed that the confidence I then expressed was not unfounded. Compare the political attitude of M. Horace Gerold now, and his attitude six months ago."

"He still gives us a great deal of trouble with those newspaper articles of his."

"I did not guarantee immediate results. Your Excellency will recollect my stating that the conversion would need a certain time; yet even in these newspaper articles, you must have remarked a daily increasing moderation."

"Moderate criticisms, M. Macrobe, are not those which give least annoyance," answered the minister phlegmatically. "Still I grant there is a change; what I have now to propose, is an arrangement that may do a great deal at a single stroke. M. Chapoteau, the member for the Tenth Circumscription of Paris, died this morning."

"Which renders a seat vacant."

"Yes, and one it will be difficult to fill as we should like. That poor Chapoteau was a fool, but he made an excellent member. He was elected immediately after the *coup-d'état*, when people were still frightened, and he never gave us a minute's bother. But it would be nonsense hoping to get such a one elected again. People have got over their fright now, and they will be for electing some Radical just to spite us; it's always the same story with these Parisians. However, if you can answer that young Gerold will come over to our side by and by, it might be worth while putting him forward,

and letting him carry the seat, which he might do, popular as he has become."

"But how could the government help him? Horace Gerold would not accept an official candidatureship; neither did he accept it, could he hope to win the seat, for his popularity would collapse on the spot."

"You don't quite follow me," answered M. Gribaud, with some impatience. "My suggestion is, that you should induce young Gerold to stand as opposition candidate. We, of course, shall have our official candidate, and we will do our utmost to get him through; but failing the possibility of that—and I repeat, I don't think it is possible—our agents will receive instructions to give Gerold all the occult assistance they can. And supposing there should be several opposition candidates, and that a *ballotage* should be necessary by reason of the division of votes; then, on the second day's polling, our candidate shall withdraw in Gerold's favor, and so make the seat safe for him. All you will have to do is to prevent the young fellow from entering into any league with his brother opposition candidates."

There was a silence. M. Macrobe mused a moment.

"I will be frank with your Excellency," he said, at last. "I am rather afraid to adopt this plan. If it were certain that within a given time of his entering the house, Horace Gerold would cross over to the government benches, the scheme would be a good one; but I greatly fear that, if once elected as an opposition candidate, he would remain faithful to his party ever after. Gratitude in the first place, and in the next the pride of occupying an absolutely unique position—that of sole liberal member in a house full of Bonapartists—would combine to revive his republican sympathies, and so undo all the work we have been so patiently pursuing of late. But there is another way in which it strikes me this election can be turned to account in bringing young Gerold over more rapidly to our camp." M. Macrobe paused, and threw his eyes round him to make sure there were no eaves-droppers. "We will prevail upon Gerold to stand as opposition candidate, your Excellency; but we must contrive to get his election defeated by the Radicals. Let the government press have orders to combat him courteously; on the other hand, let there be stirred up against him a few of those Radicals who have affinity with the Préfecture of Police, and let these fellows be incited to assail him with all the ranting violence and calumnious abuse with which their pleasant vocabulary is stored. They might be licensed

to start a paper, on purpose to attack him, and furnished with the necessary funds. This would disgust Gerold. He is extremely sensitive; he shrinks from black-guardism, and the more signal the courtesy shown him by his Bonapartist opponents, so much the more would he writhe under the low insults of his own party. If he lost his election through their doings, it would be all up with the connection. I should not be surprised to see him snap it there and then, and desert over to us in a dudgeon with arms and baggage."

His Excellency M. Gribaud passed his knotty hand over his chin. The project of M. Macrobe evidently tallied completely with his own ideas as to how an election ought to be carried on under the reign of Universal Suffrage. He saw no flaw in it. He approved.

"The only thing is about the vacant seat," muttered he. "Who will have it?"

"Not unlikely your official candidate," answered M. Macrobe, smiling. "If Gerold breaks with the Radicals he will, probably, resign in favor of the Bonapartists to mark his utter contempt for the party he abandons. Then by this election your Excellency will have killed two birds with one stone — kept the seat in the Corps Législatif for the Bonapartists, and won over a dangerous adversary."

It was some time before these two pillars of the political and financial worlds separated. As their mutual esteem for each other increased by the disclosure of kindred sentiments, they continued to converse, broaching a variety of topics, and taking one another's moral measure. When M. Macrobe was again free, night had set in. Signor Scintilli, the pyrotechnician, had discharged his twenty thousand francs' worth of fireworks — the most goodly blaze ever seen — and the maskers had all retreated from the night-air into the brilliantly-illuminated saloons where the ball was to take place. The financier hurried across terraces and up staircases in his sable gown and gold chain. He was bent upon finding Horace at once, and obtaining from him a promise to stand at the election. Wine, music, and the revelry aiding, it was presumable the young man would be more accessible to the counsels of ambition, more inclined to view his chances with a sanguine eye, than in a soberer mood to-morrow. But first M. Macrobe wished to see Angélique for a single moment, and discover by a passing question whether Horace had committed himself to any proposal.

The ball had commenced, and the financier stood regarding it from the threshold of the room. Everybody was masked, and, as a consequence, everybody was behaving

as he or she would not have done had their features been unveiled. The distinguished plenipotentiary, dressed as a fowl, was kicking his legs in the air in a style that would have secured his immediate ejection from Mabilie. A quadrille composed of official deputies and senators' wives, figuring the devil, a monk or two, some historical dames, and a clown, were going through evolutions, which excited shrieks of interminable laughter from a surrounding ring of noble and illustrious spectators. Mr. Drydust, long ago severed from his claymore, and with his arm encircling the waist of a Russian princess, was performing all his steps Scotch-reel wise, and flinging his manly limbs about him like the branches of a tree, tempest-tossed. M. Gousset had so thoroughly entered into the spirit of his part that one would have taken him purely and simply for one of the loose characters of his own novels. M. Macrobe caught sight of Angélique seated and fanning herself. She had just been dancing with the Prince of Arcola, and, on account of the heat, had for a moment taken off her mask. Her Aunt Dorotheé, utterly unrecognizable and weird to witness as Catherine de Medici, was beside her. Poor woman, she looked like a worthy soul from the upper world fallen by accident into pandemonium.

"Well, my pet, is your card pretty full?"

"O papa, look!" she said. "I don't know how I shall ever keep all these engagements."

In truth, the card was full from the first dance to the twenty-second inclusive. An instant's survey showed M. Macrobe that Horace's name was not down.

"Have you danced with M. Gerold?" he asked carelessly.

Angélique blushed scarlet.

"M. Gerold never asked me," she said, fanning herself more rapidly and speaking shyly.

M. Macrobe knew all he cared to know.

"The courtship has begun," he muttered gayly; and he made for a corner of the room where Horace, easily discernible, though masked, was handing the fascinating daughter of Cincinnatus Jickling, Esq., back to her seat after — as she prettily termed it — "going the pace" with her.

Five minutes later there were two happy men in the room — M. Prosper Macrobe, who had obtained his promise and been thanked into the bargain with a sudden and earnest effusion of gratitude that had surprised him; and Horace himself, who, animated by the whole day's proceedings, the wine, the lights, the dance, was saying, with beating pulse and glistening eye:

"Deputy at twenty-five! I shall not have a fortune to offer her, but I can make myself a name: and then, perhaps, her father will not refuse his consent. That man seems to be my guardian angel."

CHAPTER XX.

"LE LION AMOUREUX."

THE presence of the Prince of Arcola in M. Pochemolle's shop — a novel incident on the day when Horace first beheld that nobleman there — had gradually become an event of daily occurrence. M. Macrobe knew what he was about when he brought the Prince to see Mdlle. Georgette. The Prince, to his weakness for horses and heraldry, added a third more artistic weakness for women. It was not the weakness of a debauchee, but the highly-cultivated and epicurean worship for what he deemed the fairer and incomparably better half of creation.

The Prince of Arcola was one of those gentlemen who would be all the happier for having some object to their lives. To be sure, he cherished an ambition, which was to win the French Derby, and when he had accomplished that, then the English Derby — but this dream, for the fulfilment of which he relied much more on his trainer's indomitable efforts than on his own, only engrossed his energies in a partial manner, and left him time enough on his hands to feel that the world was occasionally wearisome. He would have liked to possess a large estate had that been practicable; but it was not according to his notions. If he were to begin forming a vast domain, it must be split up at his death and allotted in equal portions to his heirs, whoever they might be: and if there were half a dozen of these heirs, the portion of each would be about the size of an English yeoman's farm. This was beggarly. Had aliens been permitted to hold land in England, he would have got out of his difficulties by emigrating there and founding an estate under the tutelary auspices of primogeniture. As it was, he had more than once turned over the project of getting himself naturalized, only it was the probationary residence under some roof, not his own, which balked him.

Very correct in his attire, cut by an English tailor, shaved à l'Anglaise — that is, sporting mustache and whiskers, but no beard, and irreproachably gloved, he had adopted the habit of driving down to the

Rue Ste. Geneviève in his phaeton to see Horace. But somehow he generally came at hours when his friend was absent: and this furnished a pretext for stepping into the shop below and staying sometimes half an hour, sometimes more. The visit of a prince might be a rather appalling circumstance in the life of a British haberdasher: especially if that prince had a prancing equipage and a groom in livery waiting for him at the street corner; but the shoulders of Frenchmen are equal to any weight of honor. After the first interview or two, M. Pochemolle set down the frequent calls to the pleasure M. d'Arcola probably took in his, M. Pochemolle's conversation. There would be nothing strange in that. M. le Prince and he held, he had observed, identical views on most points. When talking politics, M. Pochemolle said: "We men of order" — implying the solidarity existing between all persons of conservative mind — such as the Prince and himself — as against the disorderly or *canaille*.

That Georgette was not so blind, need hardly be said. As she plied her needle in seeming unconsciousness, the motives of the Prince of Arcola's frequent visits could not quite escape her. At first they importuned her, these visits, and she scarcely opened her lips. But women who have been slighted are wounded in their self-love as well as in their deeper affections, and there was nothing unnatural in the fact that a homage which raised her in her own eyes by proving that all men were not as disdainful of her as Horace had been, should come to be regarded, not with pleasure indeed, but with something approaching to a mild sense of gratitude. She now and then hazarded a timid answer to some of the Prince's remarks, and her mother said she was beginning to look better.

"I am not more fortunate than usual," said the Prince, walking into the shop with a smile, after inquiring uselessly for Horace one afternoon, some five weeks after M. Macrobe's fête. "Madame Pochemolle and Mademoiselle, your servant. M. Pochemolle, why this is seditious literature; are you, too, on our friend's committee?"

"Why, no, mon prince; I was just reading one of the addresses M. Gerold has circulated," responded M. Pochemolle, ruefully, and he displayed an enormous yellow poster, headed: "Dixième Circonscription Electorale de la Seine. Candidature de l'Opposition. Circulaire à MM. les Electeurs."

"I hear the candidature is progressing remarkably well," said the Prince, accepting the seat which the draper hastened to offer him. "M. Gerold has a capital list of names on his committee, all the Orleanist pha-

anx, Baron Margauld at the head of hem."

"And yourself, M. le Prince?" asked M^{me}. Pochemolle.

"No, I am not on it, being no free agent; from father to son we must be Bonapartists in our family, but I give good wishes, and anonymous subscriptions."

"Which is what M. Macrobe does, too, I hear," said M. Pochemolle, sighing. "Dear me, M. le Prince, this is a most awkward predicament; I never voted for a Republican in my life, except when they were in power, yet I could never bring myself to vote against M. Gerold."

"Providence has left a door of escape out of every human dilemma, M. Pochemolle. A cold in the head or an attack of gout, are never-failing excuses. M. Macrobe, too, was in difficulty. As Chairman of the Crédit Parisien, and newly-appointed Knight of the Legion, he could not decently have taken open part against the Government. So he labors under the rose, and is most indefatigable. If Gerold gets through it will be mainly owing to him."

"He is a most honest man, M. Macrobe, and the shares of the Crédit Parisien continue to rise every day," said M. Pochemolle.

"I shall be glad to see M. Horace deputy," remarked his wife; "though there will be no reading his speeches in the paper now that the Government prohibits parliamentary reports. He will have a silver-laced uniform, with a sword, and twelve thousand francs a year."

"Supposing he be elected," added the Prince, doubtfully, "but I am afraid it is not so sure. You see how the Radicals are treating him; they have refused to support his candidature; and that new paper of theirs, 'Le Tocsin,' assaults him in a most scoundrelly way."

"Yes, I brought a copy of it home yesterday," grinned M. Alcibiade Pochemolle, who was measuring enough calico to make a petticoat. "They blackguarded him like good 'uns—said he only wanted to get into the House to finger the salary and then turn his coat and betray the party. I never read any thing like it. M. Horace killed that other journalist for much less than that."

"Why should not the 'Tocsin' say all this if it be true?" said Georgette calmly, without raising her eyes from her work. "It is a newspaper's duty to enlighten the public."

This was the first time Georgette had spoken, and her remark was so unexpected, so utterly at variance with the habitual gentleness of her speech, that everybody remained silent-struck. The Prince, who was

seated close to the counter behind which she worked, examined her rapidly, and noticed that her lips were set, that her eyes gleamed, and that her needle-hand, as it stitched with feverish haste, trembled, and often missed the point. She looked up and repeated quietly: "M. Horace Gerold has given no proof that he is better than other men. It seems to me that gold is the only thing for which people care nowadays. For that they would sell their bodies and their souls."

"Georgette!" exclaimed M. Pochemolle, scandalized and frightened; and M^{me}. Pochemolle, letting fall her work on the floor, grew red and white by turns.

The Prince, divining some emotion which had found its vent in the impulse of a wild moment, and which doubtless was already repenting having betrayed itself, came quickly to Georgette's relief.

"Mademoiselle speaks in a general way," he said. "She means that electors are so often imposed upon that they may be excused for being a little suspicious. I agree with her, and think that under existing circumstances we may perhaps make special allowances for our Radical friends. They have not a single representative in the House, and they are naturally anxious to get a member who will reflect their peculiar views better than M. Gerold, who, as Mademoiselle says, is as fond as we all are of the comforts and refinements which money procures."

Georgette thanked him by a glance. M. Pochemolle drew a sigh of satisfaction, having swallowed the explanation with entire faith. M^{me}. Pochemolle, whether her woman's acuteness accepted it or not, pretended to do so; and thus the Prince was enabled to divert the conversation into a new channel. He had brought tickets for a new play which was making everybody weep at the Théâtre de la Gaîté. If there was one thing M^{me}. Pochemolle liked more than another it was to have a good evening's cry over a melodrama, particularly when this satisfaction was afforded her in a stage-box presented by some generous donor.

"And you will go too, Mademoiselle, if you allow me to counsel you," said the Prince, speaking not very loud.

Though she had not yet recovered from the quiverings of her nervous excitement, she answered with more attention than she had ever lent him before: "What is the play about, Monsieur?"

"It treats of a young girl," said he, slowly, and looking at her, "who has been faithlessly abandoned by a man she loved"—

"Yes," continued she, interrupting him, whilst her eye flashed, "abandoned for a

woman who had gold to give. Go on, Monsieur, the story is an old one."

"Another man—of a different character—touched by her condition, pitying, admiring and loving her, offers her his heart"—

"And she?"

"Accepts"—

"I think not, Monsieur le Prince," returned she calmly. "The girl answered that she stood in no need of pity; that admiration is not always a tribute to be proud of; and that for a man to offer his heart to a girl who is not his equal, is but another way of saying that he thinks her fallen lower than she is."

CHAPTER XXI.

CANVASSING.

GEORGETTE'S outburst of wrath and abrupt revulsion of feeling as regards Horace were not mere caprice. They were due to her knowledge of what had passed between him and Angélique. In her dismay at the unforeseen climax brought about by her negotiations in favor of her friend, Angélique had at first known neither what to say nor what to do. She had taken four weeks meditating over the matter. Then the conviction had gathered within her that it would be honest to tell Georgette the whole truth; and she had done this, concealing no detail, but setting down every thing as it had happened with the entire conscientiousness and want of tact which distinguishes those "who mean well." From this confession Georgette had had no difficulty in gleaning that if Angélique did not actually love Horace herself, yet his declaration had so far unsettled her that she would have no strength to resist him if he prosecuted his courtship with any thing like insistence. The fact is, Angélique's first essay at diplomatizing had completely exhausted all her powers of initiative. She had laboriously collected all her weak forces for an attack, and had been not only repulsed, but placed suddenly in the position of assailed. She could do no more. If M. Gerold was in earnest in what he said, if he had really set his mind upon marrying her, if, above all, he had her father for an ally, as she somehow suspected he would have, there would be no use in her offering any opposition.

Georgette saw this, and her mild spirit was roused. She would have forgiven Horace for not loving her, and had he

married any brilliant woman of his own rank, rich or poor, from love or ambition, she would have excused him, and borne her wound with resignation. But that he should be aspiring to the hand of Angélique Macrobe revolted her. This match was too sordid. Angélique could have nothing in her but her money to attract such a man as he. She was devoid of sense, her father's reputation was tarnished, their wealth was sprung no one knew whence, and had been publicly denounced as corrupt by Horace himself less than a year before. She felt all her love shrink into scorn for a man who could prostitute himself to such a debasing alliance; the more so as she was humiliated that Angélique, in her clumsy and unauthorized attempts to plead her cause, had probably degraded her in the estimation of this man, whom she now blushed at having worshipped. It is to be remarked that the idea that Horace's affection might be owing to other causes than monetary ones, to Angélique's beauty, for instance, was the only one that escaped Georgette. But this is a venial foible. Women are as much at a loss to discover personal attractions in their rivals as men to perceive talent in their adversaries.

The Prince of Arcola drove home in that state of mind which inevitably follows a "scene" in the case of those who are unused to those incidents. He dined at his club—an English habit which he was helping to acclimatize by his example—and, being alone, had leisure to wonder how much truth and how much comedy there was in Mdlle. Georgette's performance. What puzzled him was the part Horace Gerold had played in all this. He should have been glad to know more of Gerold, who appeared to him a sort of social enigma—a man credited with enormous wealth, and living in the Rue Ste. Geneviève; a Republican whose austere principles were cited, and who danced at fancy dress-balls; a strictly virtuous youth who ravaged the hearts of drapers' daughters. Then whom did Georgette mean by the woman to whom Gerold had sold himself for gold? He thought there would be no harm in trying to elucidate some of these points next time he met Horace. He could ask him frankly whether there had really ever been any thing between him and Georgette, and how far matters had gone.

In the evening, at a party in the Faubourg St. Germain, he stopped Jean Kerjou, the journalist, who was passing in all the glory of swallow-tails and crush-hat.

"It's a while since I have seen you, M Kerjou. Can you give me any news of Gerold? He is, of course, very busy?"

"You know, mon prince, he is on our

paper now — on the 'Gazette des Boulevards.' Yes, he is up to his neck in election work, and we are toiling by his side. He will have the Orleanist votes, and the Legitimists are not disinclined to support him. Indeed, it is rather for the object of canvassing that I am here this evening."

"Then his worst enemies are the Reds. What can they mean by mauling him so pitilessly?"

"Heigh, it is their nature; but what makes the thing rather hard to stand is, that amongst them are some men Gerold knows and used to be friends with. The Radical candidate who opposes him is that fellow Albi, and one of the writers of that rascally 'Tocsin' is no other than Max Delormay, whom Gerold defended in the libel action. He is not a bad character, but has a soft head — in fact, he is a fool — and I expect Albi corrupted him in prison. Then the 'Sentinelle' has not behaved over well. Gerold counted that it would fight for him, but Nestor Roche has answered somewhat dryly that his principles oblige him to remain neutral; which, under present circumstances, is as good as being hostile."

"Then what do you think?"

"We shall win, I hope; but it will be a tough struggle."

Yes, it bade fair to be that, and an exciting struggle as well. For the first time since the *coup-d'état* a Parisian constituency was to have the opportunity of expressing its opinion with regard to the diversely-appreciated régime Frenchmen were undergoing since 1851. Bonapartists argued that now was the time to prove one's gratitude for the Crimean War, the victories of Alma and Inkermann, the International Exhibition of 1855, the cessation of street riots, the wholesale demolition of old houses, and the unexampled prosperity of trade. The Opposition retorted that here was the moment for asking where France's liberties were gone, what was done with the millions of increased taxes imposed upon the country every year; and, finally, what was the equivalent in dignity, peace, and happiness which the country was deriving from the suppression of its Republic? Paris was the only locality in the whole empire where the elections could be conducted with any independence; and the tactics recommended by the more acute amongst the leaders of the Opposition were formidable. If adopted, the Government could stand no chance against them. They consisted in this: — To bring forward as many candidates of various shades of opposition as was possible on the first day of polling, and to bind them by this common agreement: — That the one who obtained most votes on that first day should be left to stand alone against

the official candidate on the *second*, all his brother opposition candidates retiring in his favor — i.e., requesting their electors to vote for him.*

As soon as it had been published that the seat of the Tenth Circumscription was vacant, a fair array of Oppositionists had entered the lists: a Legitimist count, who had not the ghost of a prospect; an ex-deputy of Louis Philippe's time, who had sat behind M. Thiers, and might be supposed to rally the bourgeois votes; a second ex-deputy, former supporter of M. Guizot; and finally Horace, who, at the cautious solicitation of M. Macrobe, announced himself simply as "Liberal," and whose candidature excited that interest which generally attends youth, courage, and a promptly-won reputation.

Every thing was progressing favorably. That numerous section of Liberals who did not care who was elected provided it were an opponent of the Government, were looking sanguine, and the candidates had already entered into negotiations with a view to forming the desired coalition, when the sudden entry of the Radical candidate on the scene, and his loudly-expressed intention of co-operating with nobody not indorsing his own creed, had completely changed the face of matters. M. Albi, or the Citizen Albi as he called himself, was too popular with the working-class element for the coalition to offer any probability of success without him. The policy to be followed now was not to scatter the Opposition votes amongst the five or six candidates, but to put forward one man whose popularity might out-balance both that of Albi himself and the influence brought to bear in favor of the official nominee. Horace's original competitors were modest enough to perceive that their own popularities were not equal to this double emergency. They admitted that their only chance of entering the House was through the reciprocal system, and therefore they

* To illustrate this system of tactics, which led to the total defeat of the Government in the Paris elections of 1863, we will take this example: — A constituency contains 35,000 electors. There are 5 candidates in the field, 1 Official and 4 Opposition, the latter comprising 1 Legitimist, 1 Orleanist, 1 Moderate Republican, and 1 Radical. On the first day of polling the 35,000 votes are distributed as follows: Official Candidate, 15,000; Moderate Republican, 8,000; Orleanist, 6,000; Legitimist, 4,000; Radical, 2,000. No one having secured the absolute majority — i.e., the half of the votes *plus* one (17,501) — a second day's poll becomes necessary; but this time, in accordance with their previous agreement, three out of the four Oppositionists retire in favor of the foremost among them; and the result is that the Official Candidate, who, on the first day, headed the poll by 7,000 votes, finds himself completely swamped on the second, the numbers being, Republican O., 20,000; Official O., 15,000. The Imperial Government so much dreaded this strategy that the project of abolishing the system of *ballottage* (second day's poll) was more than once seriously mooted.

had retired at once, leaving the honor of fighting the unequal battle to Horace.

Every thing that could be accomplished by a powerful committee disposing of considerable funds was now done to effect the return of young Gerold, who, bitterly stung by the animosity of his former allies, had plunged into the struggle with a determination to spare nothing to win. He was the man on whom, for the moment, the eyes of all Paris—nay, of all France—were fixed. People were hoping in him by hundreds of thousands—perhaps by millions. Journalists he had never known, whom he was never likely to know, were advocating his cause day after day in terms which made the blood thrill in his veins, and sometimes brought tears to his eyes. He had all the independent journals, both of capital and provinces, behind him. Certes, it was a fine position for a young man who had done nothing. But this very unanimity only made it the more exasperating that the paper he would have most liked to possess on his side—the honest and esteemed “Sentinelle”—had refused to speak a word for him.

“I should not be acting conformably to what I deem my duty as a Republican, were I to recommend you as deputy,” had said Nestor Roche coldly in answer to Horace’s request. “The most I can do is to remain neutral.”

“May I know what is your ideal of a Republican candidate?” Horace replied, speaking with suppressed wrath.

“I doubt whether you would be able to realize such an ideal, even in thought,” responded Roche, grimly. “It is not that you dislike Republicanism, but you love other things more.”

And Horace had been unable to elicit any thing besides this.

As for Albi and Max Delormay, he had made no efforts to ascertain the motives of their enmity. Albi he had never liked, and Max Delormay was a personage who, ever since his imprisonment, had been haunted by one thought—how to turn his political martyrdom to a good account. Now that he was out of prison, his joining a paper where he was twice as well paid as he had been on the “Sentinelle,” was a perfectly natural incident; nor was there any thing very astonishing in his battering suddenly, for wages’ sake, at an old friend: journalists are used to these brotherly demonstrations. What did surprise Horace, though, and many others with him, was that Albi, Delormay, and the rest of the set should have found the funds needful to start a paper; and still more, that the Government, which stringently prohibited new journals of moderate liberalism, should

have licensed such a red-dyed, spit-fire organ as the “Tocsin.” This last circumstance, taken in conjunction with the relentless, furious war which the Radicals were waging against him, forced him to the conclusion that Government looked upon these men as its surest auxiliaries, and his detestation of their ignoble scurrility became tempered with something very like contempt for, what he was generous enough to consider, their blindness.

Police regulations allowed of no public meetings in which a candidate might address his electors, neither was a personal canvass in a constituency numbering rather more than fifty thousand voters a very practicable expedient. Official candidates got over these difficulties by convoking meetings within covered buildings, such as a theatre or concert-room, stuffing those who came with cake and wine, and then blandly declaring that this was nothing more than a private party; but the success of this stratagem would have been doubtful in the case of liberals. Their only means of making themselves known was to scatter circulars profusely, to go the full length which the Press laws allowed in the matter of newspaper-puffing, and to visit the workshops where a good many hands were employed, and there make brief speeches, if so be that the foremen allowed it.

Horace’s committee, of which M. Macrobe appeared to be the life and soul, though he only figured on it anonymously, had undertaken the distribution of the circulars; it disseminated them by cartloads, and not in the Tenth Circumscription alone, but throughout all Paris. It had, moreover, set an army of agents afoot, and a legion of bill-stickers, and a squadron of trusty peddlers who went about the Boulevards hawking cigarette-papers, lucifer-matches, and stationery, in boxes labelled GEROLD, and were often dragged off into custody for their pains. The newspapers launched leader upon leader, paragraph upon paragraph, and printed in flaming capitals on the top of their first columns:

“VOTE FOR GEROLD—CANDIDATE OF THE LIBERAL AND DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION.”

Some published letters from eminent politicians proscribed by the Empire, letters dated from exile and wishing god-speed to their young successor. Amongst these was one from Manuel Gerold. In a private letter to Horace he had pointed out with emotion and pride how great and unprecedented was the honor which the Liberal party of Paris were conferring upon a man

so young; in his public letter he recommended his son to the suffrages of the electors in the name of those past services for which he himself was suffering banishment, and vouched for Horace's Republicanism and fidelity as for his own. The visits to the workshops were performed by Horace of an afternoon and evening — he gave all his leisure time to them.

Emile accompanied him in these expeditions, and generally Jean Kerjou or some brother writer. The electioneering stirred all Emile's energies into activity. Nothing short of such an event as this could have drawn him away from his books and his briefs, but to further his brother's candidature, he abandoned both book and brief, gave himself up with all his steady power of application to the object before him, and was worth any dozen agents put together. Workmen are always delicate electors to handle. French workmen especially require to be managed with peculiar art, and Emile possessed that art; which, after all, was nothing but sterling sincerity. Where Horace failed to touch the sympathies of his hearers from speaking too much like a fine gentleman, and in language evidently coined for the occasion, Emile arrested their attention at once, and in a few pregnant sentences went to their hearts. They recognized in him a man who felt what they felt; his look, his voice, his gesture, all told it them. More than one sullen brow relaxed under the homely magic of his words, more than one stubborn foe was shaken, and there were days when murmurs of assent broke out, worth twenty salvos of applause. Still, the canvassing in the popular workshops was woefully up-hill work. The candidature of Albi, and the denunciations of the "Tocsin," made havoc of Horace's cause amongst the more excitable spirits; and the neutrality of the "Sentinelle," favorite organ of the artisan quarters, damaged him sorely with the intelligent workmen.

In this manner, five or six weeks flew by, until the day when the writ was issued. This formality precedes the election by three weeks, and in the interval the zeal of both sides redoubles — it is like the final period of training before the day of the race. Bets were being offered on this election, and the odds were in favor of Horace; for people, as usual, judged by the superior noise which his candidature was making. Emile received congratulations, and predictions of success; but he shook his head rather apprehensively: "I wish peace could be made with the Albians," he said; "we have a common foe, and when the enemy is so strong, disunion bodes little good."

This idea preyed upon him, and he had

already turned over to small purpose an assortment of plans likely to operate a reconciliation, when one evening, not a week before polling-day, Horace decided upon canvassing a large workshop where some hundred men were employed in cabinet-makers' work. That day, as it happened, the "Tocsin" had been more than usually vituperative, and honest Jean Kerjou was indignant.

"By Heaven!" he exclaimed, as he walked between the two brothers, "I don't know what withholds you from strangling these curs with your hands. It will be all I shall be able to do to keep my stick off Delormay when I meet him."

Horace said nothing.

"It is infamous, certainly," remarked Emile; "but we had better not strangle anybody. Disdain is as effective, if union be completely out of the question."

"You say 'if,'" cried Jean Kerjou. "Your brother has the patience of Saint Onesiphorus, who received a box on the ear, and begged the donor's pardon for standing in the way. Horace, you don't mean to say you could hold any terms with these vermin? I'd coalesce with the Government against them, and if any of those who voted for them on the first day offered to vote for me on the second, I'd throw their dirty suffrages back into their faces and ask them what the devil they take me for."

They reached the workshop. It stood in a not very savory alley, and was preceded by a dingy court-yard, usually resounding with echoes of wood-planing, grinding of saws, and clanging of hammers. This time it seemed as though the workmen must be absent, for the place was silent, but as they advanced they caught the sounds of an impassioned voice raised as if addressing an assembly; and as all three climbed a dingy staircase, with a greasy wall on the one side and a shaky baluster on the other, a tremendous shock of applause burst like a thunderclap over their heads and a hundred pairs of boots pounded the floor with a din that made the building tremble.

"What's this, I wonder?" exclaimed Jean Kerjou — they were pausing outside the door. "Pon my word, I believe we've actually stumbled on the badgers."

Horace pushed the door and they entered. Jean Kerjou's guess was right.

On a joiner's table, encumbered with tools, and shoved hurriedly next the wall at the end of the room in guise of a platform, stood Albi, his hair dishevelled, his quick, wild eyes glancing fire, and his parched body drawn up in the attitude of one who is taking a moment's breath after a telling oratorical hit. Max Delormay, who had allowed his beard to

grow, and was trying, without much success, to look as if he burned with hatred for tyrants, sat below him, glowering, under a wide-awake; and the body of the hall was filled up with workmen in paper caps and shirt-sleeves, leaning against or sitting upon unfinished articles of furniture, chests of drawers, cupboards and bedsteads. The floor was littered with wood-shavings and glue-pots; broad planks of oak, maple, and rosewood met the gaze; a clean smell of saw-dust and French polish pervaded the atmosphere.

All eyes were fixed upon the new-comers, and a dead silence supervened. Who were they? Albi and Delormay alone winced and changed color slightly. Horace lifted his hat and introduced himself in a few words, amidst a long murmur of curiosity. He concluded by saying: "As you are being addressed by one of my competitors, gentlemen, I will wait and claim the favor of speaking to you in my turn when he has finished."

But this did not suit Albi, who, feeling no desire to have Horace and Jean Kerjou at arms'-length of him whilst he proceeded with the rest of his oration, yelled out at the moment they were moving towards the platform: "This is no place for aristocrats and sycophants."

There was a sensation.

"No," roared he, following up his advantage. "Keep out those men, citizens, who come with smooth words to ensnare your confidence. The poor have suffered enough, I should think, from having put faith in men who betrayed them. If France is bowed down in chains and tears at this minute, it is from having trusted in adventurers. Back! Tell them to go back to their masked balls, their operas — anywhere they please out of the sight of honest workmen whom they and their compeers have reduced to slavery. See! they have nothing to offer you but lying promises, and they quail miserably before your looks. Citizens! what the Workman wants is his lost liberties, his independence, the sovereignty that was ravished from him four years ago when he was off his guard — these men will bring you flatteries; your liberties and your sovereignty, they would not give you if they could."

An ominous murmur rose. It is doubtful whether many there present cared much for their sovereignty, or were even conscious that they had lost it; but Albi spoke with a communicative fervor, his hand was stretched out menacingly, and the three strangers, instead of cowering under his harangue, seemed, on the contrary, both contemptuous and arrogant. Emile, it is true, sought to utter some words of quiet protest; but the Legitimist, Jean Kerjou, thwarted

this endeavor by shouting with fury, "You rascally hound, if all your party were of the same mud as yourself, the ravishing of your liberties was the wisest thing that was ever done, for slavery and dog-whips are the only things you are fit for."

At this there was an immense clamor. "Knock him down!" cried a young workman, with solid arms. "Chuck them out!" chorussed twenty voices more. "Stand back!" roared Horace to an individual who was flourishing a rule over his head, and as the individual only answered with a grin, a crashing blow, levelled straight between the eyes, sent him backwards into the wood-shavings. The rest of the scene was enacted amidst clouds of dust, scuffling, blasphemies, heavy *thuds* of bodies rolled over onto the floor, and finally the opening wide of a door, and the precipitate descent of three persons down the staircase, with a tempest of valedictory howls from behind.

The candidate and his two companions found themselves in the yard, bruised, dusty, torn, but not bloodstained, and minus their hats.

Jean Kerjou felt in his pockets, and discovered that his watch and purse were intact.

"It must have been an oversight of theirs," he remarked quietly.

CHAPTER XXII.

VOX POPULI.

At last the day of election dawned — a glorious day of lustrous sunshine — the weather for great events or popular solemnities. Horace awoke with confidence, though pale and full of resentment, for the treatment he had endured in the workshop was rankling in his memory, causing him profound humiliation, mingled with a now burning desire to crush his rivals. The Radicals had attempted to make political capital out of the event, and the "Tocsin" had published a fantastic account of how the "pseudo-liberal" candidate had been expelled with ignominy "by the outraged artisans whom he had sought to cajole." This had led to the instant despatching of two seconds with a demand for a formal retraction, which had been accorded; Max Delormay opportunely remembering the fate of Paul de Cosaque. But neither the fantastic account nor the retraction had done Horace much good. His friends opined that he would have done well to let the attack pass unnoticed, and the "Tocsin"

uttered piercing shrieks at what it called this violation of the liberty of the press by one who termed himself a Republican.

"This weather augurs favorably," said Emile, looking out of the window as the neighboring belfry of Ste. Geneviève chimed nine o'clock.

"Yes, the shopkeepers will not stay at home as they do when it rains," added Jean Kerjou, who had come early. "I have seen more than one French election marred by showers which kept the rain-fearing classes within doors and allowed the tag-rag and bobtail to have it all their own way."

A knock, and M. Pochemolle entered, in his Sunday coat and hat, clean-shaved and most respectable. After much mental tribulation and long doubts as to the course he ought to pursue, he had arrived at the conclusion that as the two votes of himself and his son could not possibly affect the general result in a constituency of fifty thousand, he would generously give them to M. Gerold. So he was now come to say that he and M. Alcibiade, — who, by the way, exercised his civic privilege for the first time — had risen betimes in order to record their suffrages as soon as ever the doors of the Mairie were opened. "And we were certainly the first who voted, Monsieur," added he, with effusion.

"Ay, we were alone in the room with the Mayor and the gendarmes," chimed in M. Alcibiade, whose hair was profusely oiled for the occasion. "What they call the 'urn' is a long box with a slit in it, and when I saw that, I thought I might manage to slip in several voting tickets together — I'd got my pocket full of them — but the mayor didn't allow us to put them in ourselves. It's he who does it."

Another knock, and in sailed M. Filoselle with a new waistcoat of more striking tartan pattern than any before witnessed, and lavender gloves to match. He bowed with ease. He too had been voting, having come up to Paris for the special purpose the night before. "Yesterday morning I was at Marseilles, M. le Marquis, and deep in a negotiation for sending a cargo of cracked bugles to China, where they could pass for new, the Chinese not being musical; but I said, 'Duty before profit,' and here I am. When that sun sets may you be deputy for Paris, then I shall return to Marseilles as pleased as if all the cracked bugles in Christendom had been shipped to Peking, and I had received seven per cent on the commission."

This cheerful commencement to the day removed the cloud from Horace's brow. He dressed himself with care and sallied out with the intention of paying a visit to

the Hôtel Macrobe, professedly to see its owner, really in the hope of meeting Angélique. His interviews with the financier's daughter had not been many since the scene at the fancy fête. Whether it was that she avoided him, or that he was unlucky in his hours for calling, she never seemed to be alone when he was in her company. There was always the Marquis of This or the Count of That, and sometimes bevy of ladies engaged in solving grave problems affecting the shape of a bonnet or the length of a skirt. If he could have outstaid these nobles and these ladies — but then M. Macrobe remained or Aunt Dorothee, which was proper and correct but embarrassing, inasmuch as when she was not actually obliged to take part in the conversation, Angélique sat, resplendent and divine, but silent.

On the election morning, however, M. Macrobe pretexted having a letter to write before going out with Horace to the committee-room. He withdrew; Aunt Dorothee was up stairs, and Horace found himself for a moment alone with Angélique. It was in the boudoir which the financier had fitted up with such luxury and taste for his daughter. Rare objects of art gleamed on tables and consoles, choice flowers reared their scented heads out of exquisitely-tinted vases. Angélique's beauty shone with greater radiance amidst these surroundings, like a peerless jewel out of a costly setting. She was dressed in white, and wore a single rose in her hair. A glancing sunbeam fell upon a curl that rested on her shoulder and made it glisten like spun gold.

As the door closed behind her father she blushed and rose, feigning to examine a scarlet jardenia. Horace approached her with emotion.

"Will you let me offer you a flower?" she said, as if to ward off words which she expected yet shrank from, and she broke off the finest sprig. But, as soon, she clasped her hands, blushed deeper, and said, "But no, I am forgetting that this is the day of your election and I am offering you the color of your adversaries — those bad men who, they tell me, say such cruel things."

"And does it pain you that bad men should say such cruel things? But give me the flower, it has a price now that you have culled it."

He took it from her hand and fixed it in his button-hole. She continued to gaze at the jardenias, but found nothing more to say; so he gently drew her hand in his and murmured: "Do you know why this day is so anxious a one in my life? It is because it may prove the starting-point to a career

of honor which I shall lay as my only fortune at the feet of her I adore—at your feet.”

She turned to him with blushing and almost piteous entreaty.

“Oh! why do you say that to me, M. Gerold, when Georgette is so much better and worthier of you than I?—You, who are a famous man, who will become a great one, require a partner who is clever and can aid you. I could not do that—I know I could not—and I should make you unhappy, however much I tried to do otherwise.”

“I do not want a partner who would aid me by cleverness,” answered Horace, softly. “There is a help more potent than that to brace the nerve and smooth the path of man, and that help you could give if you tried to love me a little. Promise me that and you will make me more than happy.”

Her bosom heaved, and in her trouble she could only falter:

“If it were really for your happiness, M. Gerold; but it is not. Oh, I feel it is not! But, tell me, did you never, never love Georgette?”

This question, which revealed the first timid germs of feminine sentiment, transported him. He pressed her hand to his lips: “Never,” he said, decidedly; “never.”

Footsteps resounded outside. Instinctively they drew apart.

“Now then, my dear young friend, I am at your service,” said M. Macrobe, returning. “My child, make your best courtesy to M. Gerold, who, before you see him again, will be the most enviable man in France.”

Elections in France under the Imperial system were not the noisy and boisterous events they are in certain other countries. Although this election was regarded with mortal anxiety by a full million of French Liberals, who watched in it for the first feeble symptoms of independent revival, the streets showed little or no signs that any thing unusual was taking place. It was a Sunday, as French polling-days always are; the church-bells rang, citizens, with glossy hats on their heads and smart wives on their arms, were trooping to the Bois de Boulogne or to the railway stations to catch excursion trains; and there was the customary sprinkling of soldiers in dress uniforms, some of whom to be sure, stopped and stared a moment at the yellow, red, and white candidate's addresses glaring on the dead walls. But this was all. It was only in the quarters comprised in the 10th Circumscription that any electoral movements could be witnessed, and even here the proceedings were of the simplest character. The Circumscription was divided

into twelve sections, and in each one of these was a polling-place provided by the Municipality—that is, a room hired on the ground-floor of some eligible house decorated for the occasion by a tricolor flag. Anybody was free to enter these rooms on condition of standing quiet. They contained two gendarmes, a deal-box with a slit in the lid, a table, and behind the table a half-dozen gentlemen, delegates of the Mairie and of the different candidates, seated on chairs. The electors came up one by one, handed their voting tickets folded to the municipal officer, who dropped them at once through the slit, and then retired in silence. No shouting, no cheers, no party cries. Outside some touters distributed voting papers to new-comers, and knots of two or three electors loitered in the roadway discussing the prospects of the candidate they favored. But these groups were never allowed to congregate into crowds. A couple of *sergents-de-ville* paced watchfully up and down, saying, “Circulez, messieurs, s'il vous plait, circulez.”

Horace's committee-room was in a street not very far from the Rue Ste. Geneviève. When he drove up to the door with the financier he found the nearest approach to a throng that he had yet seen that day, and a good many hats were lifted as he alighted—one or two hands even pressed forward to shake his. Inside, the room was crowded with Horace's friends and with newspaper reporters come to pick up the latest news. The “Gazette des Boulevards” mustered in great force, so did Mr. Drydust, who had brought a youthful British peer with him, the Viscount Margate, and was describing to his lordship the mechanism of universal suffrage both amongst that and other peoples. A shout arose as Horace darkened the doorway, and fifty voices were raised to announce to him the results of the first four hours' polling, as gathered approximately from the ticket-distributors at the different sections:—

Gerold	2,300
Bourbatruelle	1,200
Albi	450

There might not be much in these figures, for a large number of electors came with their voting tickets in their pockets and did not accept those proffered at the doors; still they sent a flush to the face of the triumphant candidate. Mr. Drydust declared aloud that they must be taken as conclusive, the numerous elections he had seen having invariably been decided by the results of the first four hours' polling.

M. Bourbatruelle was the official candi-

State. It was not very easy to elect a personage suited to this delicate post in a city such as Paris, and under the circumstances, M. Bourbatruelle was really not a bad choice. He was a manufacturer of clay-pipes. Every clay-pipe in Paris issued from his stores bore the name of *Bourbatruelle* printed in small letters next the mouth-piece. On bringing him forward, the Government had suggested that it would do no harm to print this name of *BOURBATRUELLE* a little bigger, to prefix the words *VOTE FOR*, and to disseminate a hundred thousand clay-pipes, thus amended, gratis amongst the population. M. Bourbatruelle had improved upon the hint by causing screws of shag to be bestowed along with the pipes—which was not bribery, although it might have been deemed so had M. Bourbatruelle been a Liberal, but simply a small token of affectionate generosity. There was a general impression current that M. Bourbatruelle was a fool—an erroneous idea, for a man is not a fool who can make himself a millionaire by selling clay-pipes. If the Corps Législatif were ever called upon to pass a law affecting the pipe-industry, every thing tended to show that M. Bourbatruelle would prove himself thoroughly competent to defend his interests. Of course, as regards laws that had no connection with pipes, M. Bourbatruelle was indifferent, and was expected to be so, for had it been otherwise he would not have been chosen for official candidate.

M. Bourbatruelle had behaved like a gentleman towards Horace, leaving a card upon him, and bowing to him with great civility once when they had met in the street. Horace had followed suit in the matter of the card, and returned the bow with respect. He had no animosity for M. Bourbatruelle, and it gave him keen pleasure to see that he was completely distancing Albi.

"I see every hope of our obtaining the victory, M. Gerold," said the grave and emphatic Baron Margauld. "Madame de Margauld has charged me to convey to you her good wishes. I think she has been not unoccupied in canvassing for you among some of her friends."

"I am most grateful," answered Horace earnestly, "and whatever be the result of the election, believe me I shall never forget the kindness that has been so freely lavished on me."

Jean Kerjou ran in breathless.

"I have just come from the section of the Rue de Tournon. Emile came there to vote, and brought ninety-two workmen with him—all rabid supporters of Albi. He had talked them over. Ah, you should have heard him! You've got a brother there who is not made of ordinary stuff. If

he had time to go the round of all the workshops by himself to-day, you would fly to the top of the poll like a flag to the masthead."

The voting begins at eight in the morning and concludes at six, and it is from this latter hour that the real excitement of a Parisian election commences. But the centre of animation is not so much in the voting quarters as on the Boulevards. On those three hundred yards of holy ground between the Opéra Comique and the Théâtre des Variétés every man flocks who holds a pen or a pencil, who may wear a gown or an epaulette, who is anybody or any thing—journalists, artists, barristers, officers, novelists, stockbrokers, all jumbled together, smoking, chattering, gesticulating, and waiting for the evening papers. At half-past six on the evening of the election you could not have dropped so much as a pea from the balcony of one of the houses of the Boulevard Montmartre without its alighting on the hat of somebody. The crowd surged rather than flowed. The cafés were crammed to suffocation—not a seat to be had in them.

The lamp-lighters, with their long ladders, found themselves unable to make any head against the current, and appealed distractedly to be allowed to pass. In the kiosks, the newspaper-women, worn out with counting money and folding broadsheets, had hung out the announcement which is their signal of distress: "No change given." And amidst all the din, the clinking of glasses in the cafés, the rattling of dominoes on the marble tables, the cries of "*Oui, Monsieur; tout de suite,*" from the waiters, snapped the exclamations, "Gerold wins!" "I'll lay on Albi: they say the Radicals polled in the afternoon." "I vote an address of condolence to Bourbatruelle."

Of a sudden, a tremendous rush. A string of newsboys were coming full tilt down the Rue Montmartre, metropolis of printers, with the second edition of the "*Gazette des Boulevards.*" They are mobbed. The kiosks are stormed. A deluge of copper coin ensues—those who have no sous give francs, and the papers were torn open:—

"LATEST NEWS.

"At the moment of going to press with our second edition, the results of the election are still uncertain; but the contest has been a very severe one. Until two o'clock the Liberal candidate maintained the head; but the majority of electors did not poll till late, and it is now supposed that the votes are so equally divided that a 'ballotage' will be necessary. The greatest order prevails."

Ten minutes later the second edition of the "Sentinelle" appeared, and was cleared away in two minutes : —

"ELECTION OF THE 10TH CIRCUMSCRIPTION.

"The votes are being counted as fast as possible in the different sections, and it is now beyond doubt that the Government have sustained an overwhelming defeat, the aggregate of votes given to the two Opposition candidates amounting to almost double the number polled by the Official candidate. M. Horace Gerold's committee are sanguine; but at M. Albi's head-quarters it is confidently asserted that the immense majority of votes polled in the afternoon were for the Radical interest. We have no means of ascertaining how far this rumor is correct."

Finally, at about eight, an impossible, indescribable scrimmage greeted the third edition of the "Tocsin," brought damp from the press by men wild with excitement, and shrieking: "*Final Result!*"

This is what the "Tocsin" printed: —

"CLOSE OF THE POLL.

TRIUMPH OF THE RADICAL CANDIDATE.

10th Circumscription.

Number of Registered Electors, 51,515

Number of Votes recorded, 45,963

Absolute Majority required, 22,982

ALBI 19,310

BOURBATRUELLE . . . 14,518

GEROLD 12,125

None of the candidates having obtained the absolute majority, a 'ballotage' will take place this day fortnight."

This news was brought to Horace in his committee-room, and he managed to glide out unperceived amid the consternation and tumult which it occasioned. He had not eaten since the morning, excitement having left him no appetite, and he now felt faint; his steps were hurried and unsteady. People passed him with contented faces, returning home after their Sunday walk; and how he envied those people, who probably led uneventful lives and had no ambition! In a quiet street an Italian was grinding an organ, and a ring of little children danced around him, filling the evening air with their gay, crowing laughter. He rather wondered that these children did not read on his face how disappointed and unhappy he was, and pause in their merry-making; but he tried to smile to them kindly, and he thought the music the sweetest, most pathetic he had ever heard. When close to his lodgings, he stopped, remembering Emile. His brother would take this to heart more

than he himself would. He must go in looking unconcerned, cheerful, if he could; he rehearsed one or two things which he could say to console Emile. And so he reached Rue Ste. Geneviève.

But just as he was about to cross the road opposite M. Pochemolle's house, he was arrested by a loud and jubilant clamor proceeding from the end of the street, and a joyous crowd debouched uttering shouts of triumph, and escorting a man perched high aloft on a pair of stalwart shoulders. It was Albi's constituents chairing him from his committee-room to his home. The police had made some sort of effort to prevent it, but they were too few, and the men too many — something like a couple of hundred; besides which, the procession was only noisy, not obstreperous, so that it was best to let it alone. On they came, cheering with all the power of their lungs, and tossing their caps into the air; and the inhabitants, attracted by this sight of by-gone times, came out on to their doorsteps, to look and nod, and clap their hands; success excites applause, like sunshine the song of birds. Horace remained standing where he was, motionless; but just as the exulting troop approached, a window facing him was opened, and Georgette appeared. She looked out and saw him at once. He was standing in the full light of a gas-lamp — she at an angle where her features were plainly visible — and their eyes met. Rapid as lightning she darted on him a look of contempt and derisive triumph, and at the moment when the vanquishers swept beneath her, leaned forward, caught up a nose-gay that was standing on the sill, and threw it to Albi.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MACROBE À LA RESCOUSSE.

To have been during three months the most prominent man in one's country, to have dreamed of becoming, at an age when others are subalterns, the unique representative and leader of a party that numbered the best, wisest, and greatest men of France — and to find one's self suddenly fallen again to the position of writer on a second-rate newspaper, was bitter enough. But what redoubled the chagrin and mortification of Horace was the way in which his supporters of yesterday — the journals that had been his champions — hastened to desert him and passed to the side of his rival. So long as it had been a question of choos-

ing between two candidates — one an educated gentleman, the son of an illustrious patriot, and a proved Liberal like Horace; the other, a darksome and not over well-known Revolutionist like Albi — the moderate, enlightened organs of public opinion had not hesitated. But now that the ultimate lay between taking the official candidate or having Albi, the issue was changed. After all, Albi was a Liberal, he would not vote as the other two hundred and sixty members in that servile, voiceless chamber. He would raise his cry on behalf of proscribed freedom; he would protest against the laws of tyranny passed in the name of France. It was absolutely necessary that the Opposition should have, at least, one spokesman; and the liberal journals unanimously called upon Horace Gerold to retire in Albi's favor. To make matters worse, Emile, though he did not verbally urge this course, implied by his manner that he desired its adoption; and Manuel Gerold, writing from Brussels, spoke of it as imperative — as a thing that did not even admit of discussion. "The life of a public man," he wrote, "must be one of self-sacrifice. Personal ambition, predilections, rancors, must all sink before considerations of public good. This man was your enemy yesterday, to-day you must be his ally; else your electors would have the right to think it is yourself you wished to serve, not them."

To resign in favor of Albi, to further the return of a man who had pursued him with uncalled-for spite, marred his own certain triumph, and who, had the positions been reversed, would never have given way to him — having vowed not to do so when he started — this was an act of magnanimity which demanded superhuman courage. Horace blenched at it; it chilled his heart to think of. Nor did his judgment incline to it readily; for was not this man a malicious, serpent-tongued slanderer — had he not shown himself both tortuous-minded and unscrupulous, and was it to be supposed that the Liberal party could be benefited by having such a personage as that for its representative? In his perplexity he sought the Hôtel Macrobe, as much to cheer himself after his cruel deception by a look at and a word from Angélique, as to ask counsel of the financier whom he was beginning to look at as his mentor. But, as though all creation were conspiring against him, neither Angélique nor her father were at home. So he walked back sorrowfully and betook himself to the society of his friends of the "Gazette des Boulevards," the only paper which had remained faithful to him, and whose advice, as conveyed energetically by Jean Kerjou, was

"not to abet the entry of a blackguard into Parliament."

M. Macrobe was not at home, because closeted in private conversation with M. le Ministre Gribaud. This time the financier was subjected to no ante-room delay as at his last audience. On his arrival the venerable Bernard had saluted him to the ground, and ushered him at once into the Minister's presence, and M. Gribaud had motioned to him with his finger to take a seat.

"Well, M. Macrobe," began his Excellency, rather sourly. "It seems we've overdone it."

"I certainly thought the official candidate would get through, your Excellency. It never entered my thoughts that this man Albi could make such a hit."

"Nineteen thousand votes, and twelve thousand given to young Gerold; thirty-one thousand Oppositionists in one constituency! Ah! how right we are to keep the curb well strained; how quickly this devil-city would overturn us if we let it! But now what is to be done? Albi of course will not retire; but will Gerold do so in favor of our man, as you predicted?"

"Things have not turned out as I had planned," answered M. Macrobe, with his brows knit. "I had counted that the two rival candidatures would divide the Opposition votes and allow the Government nominee to get in easily; but then I had not foreseen that the Opposition was so strong. As for Albi, we have no hold on him. He came forward on the understanding that his expenses should be paid and that he should have the funds to start a paper. It was necessary to find a name which would rally a certain number of Radicals; but I imagined that he would get ten thousand votes at the most, and that when he had served our purpose we could simply let him drop and suppress his journal. But, for the present, it would not be safe to try this. He does not know that it is the Government who have brought him forward; he fancies it is a Radical Committee, and if this committee were to play him false at such a moment, just as he was on the point of succeeding, he would suspect something and denounce it aloud; for though he be a vicious, venomous brute, he is no traitor. No, he must never learn that the committee under whose orders he has been acting is composed of men in the pay of the Prefecture, and that all his contributors on the 'Tocsin,' with the exception of that simpleton Delormay, draw their inspirations from Ministerial source. The scandal would become public and injure the Government. What we must do is to defeat Albi on Sunday week; then the committee can say

that, his election having failed, they see no use in continuing the paper, and withdraw their caution money. But first we must beat the man, and now there remains but one way to do that; only one."

"Which? If young Gerold will retire in favor of Bourbatruelle we might manage. There cannot be much love lost between him and the 'Tocsin' I should think." And his Excellency chuckled a little.

"No, there is not. He hates Albi ten times more than he ever hated the Government, and if left alone would throw the Radicals overboard without much parley. But he is influenced by his brother—a young prig—and by his father, so that although I should not actually despair of bringing him to coalesce with us, yet the thing would require an effort and more diplomacy than it would be worth. I say more than it would be worth, because it is not so sure that even if Gerold did resign in Bourbatruelle's favor, all his electors would obey him. The unexpected lead taken by Albi has roused the hopes of the Opposition. All their papers are now backing Albi, and supposing that out of Gerold's twelve thousand electors, eight thousand were to vote for the official candidate, and four thousand only for the other man, Albi would still win. I suggest, your Excellency, that the man who should withdraw is M. Bourbatruelle. His supporters would naturally poll for Gerold whether they were asked to do it or not, and these fourteen thousand votes would beat the Radicals out of the field."

"And Gerold; how will he behave when he is in the House? You were not encouraging on this score last time we talked the matter over."

"True, your Excellency; but the conditions are altered. If Gerold had been elected as an Opposition candidate, he would have given us trouble, but if he gets in now, he will readily perceive that he owes it to the Conservatives. The affair, however, must be managed with tact. Let Monsieur Bourbatruelle withdraw without recommending his electors to vote for anybody. The majority of the opposition press, deeming that Albi, with his nineteen thousand original votes, has the best chance, will probably continue to support him; the Government press, on the contrary, will take up Gerold's colors, and this will serve to widen the breach which the first day's poll has made between the Liberal candidate and the Radicals. Once in the House, the conviction that he is virtually representing a constituency of Bonapartists and temperate Liberals will keep Gerold within bounds. He is not likely to forget the party that opposed him so ruthlessly, and he will feel

proportionate gratitude for the men who secured his triumph. A little courtesy and tolerance on the part of his colleagues will do the rest. But if the worst comes to the worst—I mean, if Gerold proves unmanageable—he need not remain in the House more than a year. We are in 1856; in another twelvemonth come the general elections."

His Excellency M. Gribaud rubbed his left ear thoughtfully, then cracked the joints of his tough fingers.

"Well, we will try your plan," he said, slowly. "It's rather like admitting a young wolf-cub into a sheep-fold to put this Gerold into the Corps Législatif; but perhaps the cub's teeth are a bit blunted. I will send for Bourbatruelle at once. We shall have to give him something. H'm, the Legion of Honor will do. Then we shall have to pay his expenses. By the way, Gerold has not got a *centime*, of course; and I suppose you've not found out what he and his father do with their money? I learn from the sub-prefect at Hautbourg that charitable donations are sent by them every quarter-day; but the town complains that it is ruined, root and branch."

"Better days will perhaps come for it," answered M. Macrobe, laconically.

"Yes, if you succeed in your rôle of General Monk."

"Who is General Monk, your Excellency?" asked M. Macrobe; for, though an astute financier, his historical education had been neglected.

"General Monk was a shrewd fellow who restored a penniless young king to his estates and then helped him to govern them," said M. Gribaud, grinning broadly.

A slight tinge of color came to M. Macrobe's parchment countenance, but he laughed.

"Well, I hope he was well repaid, your Excellency."

"Oh, yes! it was a good speculation, as you gentlemen of the Bourse say." And, continuing to grin, M. Gribaud took up his pen and indicted a line to M. Bourbatruelle, the clay-pipe manufacturer. "This will do the business," he said; "but mind, Monsieur Macrobe, I am acting now in deference to your judgment, and we shall regard you in some way as surety for this young fellow's good behavior."

The financier made an obeisance, and the audience being now terminated, withdrew.

But he did not go straight off to Horace to hold out the plank of safety which he had just hewn out for him. Events had marched fast, but the time had come for accelerating them, if possible. Horace Gerold had entered the net, the meshes must now be

closed upon him rapidly; he must be brought to propose for Angélique, to break with his party, and to place himself in M. Macrobe's dependence, all at one swoop. This could be effected by leaving him to his misery for these next few days. He must be left to drink to the dregs the cup of his humiliation — to chafe and writhe under his abandonment; and then, when all the world seemed bitterness and deception to him, his future father-in-law could step in like a *deus ex machinâ*, smooth away his troubles, and send him careering once more on the high-road to glory. So M. Macrobe merely wrote a line to request Horace not to take any steps as to retiring until the following Sunday — seven days before the second ballot — when his committee would consider the subject, and by the same post he arranged that M. Bourbatrielle's retirement should also be held in suspense until the same date. This done he sent Mlle. Angélique into the country with her aunt for a day or two, and took an easy opportunity of having Horace informed by a third person that this young lady was being wooed by the Prince of Arcola, and would probably soon be asked in marriage by that nobleman. "If he really loves her," argued M. Macrobe, "this will make him miserable and furious; if it be a mere inclination, jealousy will stimulate it, and, no doubt, fan it into something warmer."

Thus the week passed by. The posters with Albi's name were renewed on the wall; the "Tocsin" gloated over its victory and reviled the conquered; the chorus of journals which besought the Liberal candidate to do his "duty" swelled every day, and Horace himself was as thoroughly galled, distracted, and despondent, as can be imagined.

On the Sunday he paced his room in an agony of doubt, trying to form a resolution, yet not daring to take it.

"I don't see that there's any thing to hesitate about," grumbled royalist Jean Kerjou, who was embedded in an arm-chair and puffed solemnly at a cigar. "The moral sense of this generation seems to be blunted. What! Here is a cur whom you would not admit into your back-kitchen, and half the newspapers of France are laying their heads together to plan how they may foist him upon an assembly of gentlemen! God bless the days when there were no parliamentary institutions to make such tricks look excusable in the name of party tactics. Heaven bless the times when there existed a freemasonry between gentlemen to send rogues to Coventry, and when fellows like Albi were shunned like the pest."

"It's not the man we should be helping into the Corps Législatif, but his principles," answered Horace feebly.

"Oh! his principles, my dear M. Gerold," exclaimed Arsène Gousset, laughing. He had come with a dainty-looking volume of somewhat improper poems — his composition — which were being much read in fashionable spheres, and which he desired the "Gazette des Boulevards" to handle tenderly. "What principles do you think those men have, except this immortal one, to turn out every man that holds a place, and to put themselves in his stead? You will say he is a Republican; but so is every man who has not a *centime*, and sees no chance of ever possessing one. And this is no more a title of honor than to say that his trousers are ragged, his washerwoman's bill unpaid, and that he dines off boiled beef, not being able to afford venison. The rich and educated who join this band are either perspicuous citizens who want to climb the political ladder quickly, and know that there is no better stepping-stone for their purpose than the heads of the unwashed; or amiable enthusiasts, like your father, who would govern wolves with kind words, and jackals with forms of logic. As soon as these excellent theorists get into power, they begin by locking up the dog-whips, chains, and collars. They proclaim the liberty of howling; and a few weeks after they are howled out of office — as your father was. The fact is, the doctrine of Republicanism starts from the assumption that, however ignorant and brute-like an individual member of the lower orders may be — and that he is both ignorant and brute-like is sufficiently proved by our interminable schemes for educating and refining him — yet, that a few millions of such individuals, putting their ignorance and brutishness in common, become a class full of sense and virtue, both worthy and competent to rule; which seems to me like contending that, although one of the jackals above-mentioned, lean and ravenous, might be a danger to the poultry-yard, yet that a good big troop of such jackals turned loose together among the hen-coops would show the world what abstemiousness was, and extend a brotherly protection to the fowls. I should like to get a Republican candidly to acknowledge — but they never will do so — that Republicanism, as we understand it nowadays, has never existed anywhere, and when tried has eternally broken down. Greece and Rome were aristocratical oligarchies, in which all the lower orders were slaves. It was much the same thing at Venice, Genoa, and in Holland. Republican in name, virtually close vestries, in which no man was admitted to power who

had not a square cash-box to recommend him. In South America, democratic Republicanism — considerably diluted, however, by the slavery of the negroes, who do all the servile work — has been on its trial nearly half a century, and has resulted in a revolution every twelve-month. There have been in Chili since the independence, something like twenty *coups-d'état*, in Peru rather more. In Mexico the people change their executive as they do their shirts. As for the United States — where again we find the negroes, who represent the proletarian classes of Europe, kept under heel — Republicanism has hobbled along hitherto there because the country, not being half peopled, there is land, like air and water, for all comers; and the subversive gentlemen who in Europe swarm in our large cities, and overturn our governments for us, go out into the West and found states of their own, where liberty, equality, and fraternity flourish under the shade of the bowie-knife, the revolver, and the bludgeon. But in a few hundred years hence, when the descendants of these squatters begin to wash their hands and fence in their properties, when there is not a rag more land to distribute to immigrants, and when it becomes a question of providing for several million paupers, I doubt whether apostles of the Albi school will be more appreciated in American upper circles than they are with us. State prisons and gibbet-trees will be erected on their behalf, as they have been in this land. Persecutions, revolutions, and re-actions will succeed one another like a rotation of crops, and the States will pass through their cycle of monarchies even as the rest of the world has done. You see, there are certain orders of things you will never be able to reconcile, and amongst these is the empty stomach and the full one. To the end of time, the man who has not dined will be the foe of the man who has; and the history of revolutions is but that of the alternate triumphs of these two over one another. To-day it is Gribaud and Company who dine, to-morrow it may be Albi and Brothers. Only, to think that Albi Brothers have any object but to get this dinner, or that, if they once had the keys of the State larder, anybody, save themselves, would be the better for it, is one of those bright fallacies that denote a cheerful contempt for the lessons of history. Revolutions never abolish abuses — they only change them. We have gone through three bloody revolutions, and four changes of dynasty, to set over us M. Gribaud, who presses as heavily on mankind as ever did the Duc de Choiseul, or the Marquis de Maurepas; a fourth revolution would give us M. Albi. Upon

my word, I consider things are very well as they are; the change would be insignificant in so far as results went, and it would cost money, to say nothing of comfort."

The Court Novelist emitted all this in his most lively tone of bantering persiflage, blowing wreathing clouds of smoke towards heaven, and stroking his carefully trimmed yellow beard with a hand on which glittered an enormous diamond, the gift of an empress. But his paradoxes did not offer any solution to Horace, and when, at length, he smilingly withdrew along with obdurate Jean Kerjou, whose parting words were to "fight till grim death, as my Breton countrymen do," Horace began striding up and down as before, but more harassed, vacillating, and moody than ever.

"Duty!" he exclaimed, bitterly, "what do men ever gain by performing it?" and he thought of Georgette and her unfeeling insult on the evening of his defeat. It was an insult the more cruel as he was unable to divine the motive of it. He had been wrong in flirting with Georgette; he had felt this, and retreated before it was too late both for himself and for her. But was this the way to be revenged on him? When he met her by chance, she glared upon him with the eyes of a little tigress, or, what was worse, treated him with undisguised, aggressive scorn, as if he were some abject criminal. She was not even content to trust to fortuitous occasions for making him feel her spite. One evening, returning home, he had found the work-box which he had given her lying on the table, and not a word of explanation with it, not a line to mark what she was offended at, or what he might do to soothe her resentment away. She was behaving without any sense or reserve. Had she been a misguided girl quarrelling with her paramour, she could not have acted otherwise; for, after all, he had given her no direct cause for offence. His sins, if sins they were, had been of a negative kind. He had left off seeing her because he wished to conduct himself as an honest man; and when, after a long interval, he had ventured upon entering the shop again, he had found the Prince of Arcola there. And this had recurred several times: more than once when he had passed the shop latterly, he had seen either the Prince himself or his well-known phaeton waiting at the corner of the street.

At this recollection of the Prince of Arcola his brow grew black.

M. Macrobe had not misreckoned on the emotion which the report of Angélique's marriage would cause him. The news had gone into Horace's heart like a knife. Coming at such a moment, when the cup of his mortification was already brimming, it was

a savage sort of blow. It put him roughly back in his place, showing him what a poor devil he definitely was, and how extravagant was the pretension for one such as he to espouse a millionaire's daughter. Till that moment he had never reflected on Isidore Macrobe's wealth in connection with Angélique; but he did so now, and measured at a glance the distance that separated him — him, a struggling journalist and barrister — from the brilliant Prince of Arcola. So this Prince was destined to thwart him in his love, as that man Albi was doing in his ambition! At the outset of his career, he was to be stopped dead short by a dandified sportsman and a ranting demagogue; nay, more, he was asked in the name of duty to connive in this result! Angry and pale, he swore this should never be. He had torn himself away from Georgette, that she might be respectably married and never know trouble; and what was the consequence? She despised him for his pains, and coquetted with a Prince whose intentions towards her were clearly what those of most other men of easy morals would be in such a contingency. Now, people were soliciting him to make a new sacrifice, in order, no doubt, that Albi might laugh at him in his turn and take him for a credulous simpleton. No, no; as Jean Kerjou said, this was a case for fighting till the end. He would tell the Prince that a libertine, titled though he were, was no fit husband for Angélique; and if the Prince resisted, why there were means of settling these questions, in France, without much loss of time or words. As for Albi, committees or newspapers, friends or foes, might say what they pleased — if he could prevent that fellow from succeeding, he would do so; and if he could not, it should, at least, not be said, that it had been for want of the trying.

Whether by accident or design M. Gousset had wrapped his pretty volume of improper poems in a number of the "Tocsin," and there they lay both on the table together, the improper fashionable book, and the improper democratic gazette. Horace suddenly caught sight of the journal, and, full of his new resolution, snatched it up and ran his eye over the leading article; as usual, an attack on himself, written by Albi, not without talent, but in a style of violence positively reeking with hatred and injustice. It was one of those infamous articles which are intended to stab deep, and which do stab, however steeled we may be against them by usage. Horace flushed all over as he read it. He crushed the sheet in his hand, and darting to his desk, penned a letter to the chief of the independent journals who were calling on him to retire.

He was so intent upon his work, his pen flew so rapidly over his paper, that he remained unconscious of the presence of M. Macrobe, who having knocked without eliciting an answer, had opened the door and glided in. When he had dashed off his signature, he looked up, gleaming.

The financier's eye was mutely interrogative. Horace handed him the letter without speaking.

M. Macrobe perused it with a nod.

"So far so good," he said, "this will do as a beginning; but men like you must do more than talk, they must conquer. You would not be sorry to crush this Albi?"

Horace's eyes glistened, and he waved his hand — an eloquent gesture — it meant, "Give me the chance."

"Then the day is yours," said M. Macrobe. "I have come to tell you that M. Bourbatruelle retires; you will remain face to face with Albi; but as you will have the votes of all the honest people who, thank Heaven! are a majority, your return is assured."

Horace rose to his feet; it seemed to him in that moment that the room swam.

"Yes," pursued the financier calmly; "I saw M. Gribaud, and he said, 'The Government prefer being criticized by a man of honor like M. Gerold, rather than by a low-bred person like M. Albi. Besides, all the votes given to M. Bourbatruelle belong of right to M. Gerold, for the electors of the Tenth Circumscription are liberal to a man, and if some of them vote for the official candidate, it is only out of dread for theories which are neither liberalism nor republicanism, nor any thing else but blasphemy and blunder. If these electors had not suspected M. Gerold of making common cause with the revolutionists they would have elected him the other day.' This is what M. Gribaud said. He is much maligned, I assure you, is M. Gribaud. He spoke of you in the highest terms, and affirmed that the Government were particularly touched by the strikingly honorable way in which you had carried on the contest."

A tumult of emotion welled up in Horace's breast, and broke upon his face in changes of color rapid as a succession of waves.

"M. Macrobe," he faltered, springing forward, "I am sure it is to you I owe this — it is you who have been working to secure me this triumph."

"Pooh, pooh! my dear young friend, I have done my duty, that is all. You owe nothing to anybody save yourself."

"No, no. You say that because you are too generous to accept thanks. You are continually befriending me, who have done nothing to deserve it; and how I can ever

repay these acts of kindness and devotion is more than I know or can imagine."

"Why talk of that? Believe me, I am more than repaid already by the pleasure of serving you," said the financier, smiling. "I have but one wish, M. Gerold, and that is to see you prosper."

"Then add one more to your benefits, and complete my happiness," cried Horace, impulsively. "M. Macrobe, let me speak on a subject that is nearest my heart, but which I might not perhaps have dared to mention, had it not been for this new proof of the interest you bear me. I have had the presumption to hope that we might some day be connected by a closer tie than that of mere friendship. Yes, though I have nothing to offer but an honest name, and can compete with none who have great rent-rolls to give, I love your daughter. Yesterday I heard a report that Mdlle. Angélique was already betrothed to the Prince of Arcola, and the news caused me inexpressible sadness. If you could only tell me that this was not true, and cheer me with the assurance that I shall not hope in vain—that when I have created myself a position, you will allow me to pay my addresses to your daughter—you would be fulfilling my fondest desire, and I should look back upon this day as the most fortunate in my life."

M. Macrobe's features very cleverly expressed the greatest surprise, and he became grave.

"I had never suspected this, M. Gerold," he said; "but I should be dissembling were I to conceal how much your communication flatters me. I am unaware that the Prince of Arcola has paid his addresses to my daughter. I think the report must be a false one; but, in any case, rent-roll is the last qualification I should consider in any one who aspired to become my child's husband. I was a poor man myself, and have not found that wealth adds much to one's happiness. Honesty, courage, and ability are the only riches I set store by. In a word, my dear young friend, there is no man I would sooner own as my son-in-law than yourself."

In England, a man would have grasped the speaker's hand; in France they manage these things differently, Horace flung his arms round M. Macrobe's neck, and kissed him on both cheeks.

If he could have known the pleasure which this embrace gave the worthy gentleman!

On the following Sunday, Horace Gerold was elected Deputy of the City of Paris; though it was a close shave, as cognoscenti remarked. The Radicals, encouraged by

their first success, came up to the poll multiplied, united, and strong. The Bonapartists rallied round the "Liberal" candidate and the result was:—

Number of votes recorded, 46,347.

GEROLD. 23,258

ALBI. 23,089

That is, a majority of ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-NINE VOTES!

A few weeks later, the "Gazette des Boulevards" announced to the world that a marriage had been arranged "between the newly-elected member for Paris, our contributor, M. Horace Gerold (the Marquis of Clairefontaine), and Mdlle. Angélique Macrobe, daughter of the eminent chairman of the Crédit Parisien."

CHAPTER XXIV.

EPISTOLARY.

So M. Macrobe had won the first game of his rubber. Won it promptly, cleverly, and completely. The second now began, and from the outset it looked as if he would win that too. Ten months after the Paris election the following three letters found their way through the post:—

From Emile Gerold, Paris, to Manuel Gerold, Brussels.

"RUE STE. GENEVIEVE, Jan. 7, 1857.

"MY DEAR FATHER, — I have just come in from pleading a rather dry case before a not very intelligent judge, and I find your good, welcome letter awaiting me. This weekly correspondence with you, that is the reading of your missives and the pleasure of replying to them, constitutes the gleam of sunshine in my somewhat lustreless life. Not, mind you, that I complain of this monotony, for I have failed to perceive that those whose existences are more variegated seem much the happier for it. But it is nevertheless a relief to turn now and then from my habitual studies—the poor devices by which men may best outwit one another—to the perusal of language so vivifying in tone, so humanely loving, so full of generous truth as yours. It is like escaping for a moment into a purer world.

"Yet, on the present occasion, are there not traces of unusual depression in certain passages of your letter; I mean those in which you speak of Horace? I have no wish to allude unnecessarily to the events of the last few months, which I can guess

have pained you and which I will not conceal have to some extent disappointed me. But be assured that, in so far as the heart goes, my brother is unchanged. He is, perhaps, a little sore at your not having come to Paris for his marriage, and it may be that this feeling reveals itself, as you say, by a slight tone of pique in his letters; but I do not think we should be altogether surprised at this, for it only argues the great value he attaches to your approbation and his extreme sensitiveness lest any of his acts should be susceptible, in your eyes, of misinterpretation. On this last score, it is true, I might re-assure him; for that his marriage was one of pure affection, unalloyed by any mercenary thought, neither you nor I certainly ever doubted. But it is not enough to tell him this. In his present temper of mind, he requires us to approve without reserve all his recent undertakings. Binding up, as it were, his marriage, his friendship with M. Macrobe, and his political course together, he resents any stricture upon one incident as a blame upon all three; and it wounds him to the quick to suspect that you or I can even remotely concur in any of the harsh criticisms which these different occurrences have evoked from his enemies.

"No doubt this morbidly nervous mood will give way in time to feelings more in consonance with Horace's naturally genial disposition; but until it does, I for one — half of whose contentment in life would be gone were I estranged from my brother — I submit to the necessity of the case and tacitly acquiesce in every thing. I wish our party had behaved with a little more fairness and tact to him. That they should have called upon him to retire after that unlucky first ballot was natural enough, but I do think it was wanting both in justice and generosity to support Albi against Horace once the other man had retired, and to reproach Horace when elected with being an official candidate. From a mere party point of view it seems to me that it would have been more politic of the Liberals to claim my brother's return as a victory. He would have served their cause then and faithfully; but their almost disdainful repudiation of him, contrasting as it does with the singular courtesy and kindness shown him by the other side, are producing the only fruits that could be expected under the circumstances. Horace complains that he has been ill-treated, and never refers to the subject without indignant bitterness. Nevertheless, from what I can gather of the debates in the Corps Législatif — scraps of which, you know, reach the public ear through drawing-room echoes — his is the only voice in that gloomy

building ever raised in defence of liberty. He opposes Government bills, advocates reforms which in times like these might be called subversive; and, were he stimulated by contradiction, I suspect he would go greater lengths in liberalism than many of those who essayed to brand him as a Bonapartist would dare do. But nobody contradicts him; I hear on the contrary that he is applauded. The plan of his adversaries appears to be to enthrall him by civility; and there could in truth be no surer way of touching one who is as open to kindly influences as he is quick to feel injustice. However, there is a boundary line dividing Horace's now wavering attitude from total secession, and when he has reached this line and sees the pit beyond, he may recoil. Such is my hope, I might add — my prayer.

"Meanwhile, domestically speaking, Horace is I believe happy. He resides in his father-in-law's house, and every time I visit him there, I find him looking bright and pleased with his lot. His wife is a gentle, lovable young person, shy and rather silent, but I think good. She submits to him in all things, and his chief pre-occupation seems to be to make her happy. M. Macrobe, at whose table I have once or twice dined, rather to satisfy Horace than myself, is also — I must do him that justice — very zealous in catering for his son-in-law's felicity. He bustles about, forms projects, agrees with every thing Horace suggests, and to me in particular he is most attentive. The family circle has lately been completed by the arrival of a Crimean hero just returned at the Peace. His name is Captain Clarimon; he was introduced to me as a kind of nephew of M. Macrobe's, and is, so far as I could judge, a pleasant fellow. Horace and he appear to have already struck up a fast friendship.

"I perceive I have covered so much paper that I will close here. I repeat, my dear father, how much pleasure your letters always give me; but it continues to be to me a source of daily increasing sorrow that your voluntary exile should be thus perforce prolonged, and that we should be compelled to exchange our thoughts in writing instead of by word of mouth.

'Cui dextræ jungere dextram
Non datur, ac veras audire et reddere voces.'

"Why does not this Second Empire fall and open the gates of France anew to all the great and good men who are sharers in your proscription?

"With tenderest respect and sympathy,

"Your affectionate son,

"EMILE GEROLD.

"P.S. — I have forgotten to mention that

I may soon be obliged to date my letters from elsewhere than here, owing to the retirement from business of M. Pochemolle and the consequently possible sale of this house. The news took me a little by surprise, when the good man brought it up to me in person yesterday, enveloped in pompously deferential explanations that made the gist of the communication at first a little obscure. He said that 'my esteemed connection by alliance, Monsieur Macrobe,' had been the instrument of his attaining more rapidly to fortune than he ever would have done, had he confined himself to the beaten tracks of commerce. He had, by Monsieur Macrobe's advice, invested money in the *Crédit Parisien*, buying shares at five hundred which were now worth fifteen hundred, and the result was, that Madame Pochemolle was recommending him to retire and purchase a villa with a garden and a pond — Madame Pochemolle inclined, said he, for gold-fish in the pond — somewhere in the suburbs of Paris. I could see that it cost the excellent man a pang to relinquish the 'Three Crowns' to a stranger, and that, so far as he was concerned, the shop where his father traded, and the modest gains which they earned, seemed preferable to all the suburban villas in the world, with or without gold-fish. But, neither Madame Pochemolle nor Monsieur Alcibiade being of the same opinion, the draper is out-voted and will be set to perform — will he, nil he — the comedy of 'Le Rentier malgré lui.' There was almost a touch of pathos in the way he exclaimed, 'Our fathers made their earnings slowly, and prospered long; I have gone farther in one year than they did in fifty; yet somehow it doesn't give me the pleasure I should have thought. I keep fancying that money which comes so quickly into the pockets of those who have done nothing to deserve it, must have come equally quick out of the pockets of those who didn't deserve to lose it.' I promised M. Pochemolle I would apprise you of his change of condition. His words were, 'Pray, sir, inform my most respected preserver, with my humble duty, that selling cloth or wearing it, I shall remain as much his obliged servant as heretofore.'

"Ever affectionately,
"E. G."

*From M. Hector Filoselle, London, to
Horace Gerold, Paris.*

"LEISSESTER SQUARE, Jan. 15, 1857.

"MONSIEUR LE MARQUIS, — I date this letter from the banks of the Thames in the metropolis of the Queen Victoria, whither I have journeyed upon business, and the occasion I seize is that of the Sunday re-

pose, which, in this great country, reminds me of the repose of model convict prisons. Great Heaven! figure to yourself a square as large as the Place Vendôme, and not one soul visible in it but a single policeman, who is melancholy; and around and about this policeman closed shops and cafés hermetically barricaded, as if they feared an invasion; for the English law decrees that man shall not be thirsty of a Sunday morning, and the publican who sells him drink is fined by the tribunal of Queen's Bench two sterlings. These laws astonish the stranger. Also, I have noticed that it is interdicted to play music on the Saturday, for yesterday I witnessed a milord chase from his door, with indignation, a grinder on the organ, who was presently pursued by a policeman, and, as they told me, conducted to prison, where he will be judged by the tribunal of Habeas Corpus. However, these are details with which I have not the heart greatly to occupy myself: being sad, even to the point that the business questions themselves lose their interest for me. Ah! Monsieur le Marquis, it was not merely a superficial affection I nourished for Mademoiselle Georgette. I had long meditated the project of making her happiness and mine, and on the day when you interposed, speaking the good word for me, I cried to myself, 'Ah, it will become a reality, that dream I cherish!' But fortune and other causes, amongst which I suspect the presence of a rival suitor, have coalesced themselves to defeat my ardent hopes and your benevolence. Already, at my last visit but one to Paris five months ago, shortly after your own marriage, Monsieur le Marquis, I noticed that the attitude of my future father-in-law, M. Pochemolle, had undergone a change towards me, and that the demeanor of my future mother-in-law — whom I have ever gratified with a moderate liking — was chilly, not to say freezingly, distant. On my next visit these impressions were more than confirmed, and now I am in receipt of a letter from Monsieur Pochemolle, which leaves no longer a place for doubt. He states that he relinquishes the draper's trade to devote himself henceforth to a retired life, and he adds that, under these altered circumstances, perhaps I shall see the propriety of breaking off an engagement which has ceased to be so suitable as it once looked. Alas, the good man! I know very well that it is not he who would write in this way; but husbands are the slaves of their wives, notwithstanding the Code Napoleon, and Monsieur Pochemolle does but express the sentiments that have germed in the feminine but unelevated soul of Madame Pochemolle. You will excuse me for

making you thus the confidant of my destroyed illusions, Monsieur le Marquis, but I wished to assure you that even in this moment of grief, when the faithlessness of woman is once more exemplified at my expense, I retain a recollection full of gratitude for the manner in which you deigned to befriend me. Life is a bale of mixed goods, out of which one draws at the hazard, to-day stuffs of bright color, to-morrow mourning crape. I this time have lit upon the crape. Well, well, it was fated; but, at least, this consolation is given me, to feel that Mademoiselle Georgette is, like myself, the victim of destiny, not the willing accomplice of a plot for ruining my well-loved castle in the air. Ah! the usages of the world forbid my now seeking any communication with her who was my betrothed, and my own pride will not permit me ever again to cross the threshold of those who have closed to me their doors. Yet should ever the opportunity present itself, I will say to Mademoiselle Georgette—as I would respectfully pray you to say for me, should the opportunity come first to you—that I bear no malice, but wish my rival well. This is for Mademoiselle Georgette's sake, against whom I could not bring myself to feel anger, even if I would. As for her mother—but no; I will take a noble vengeance on that woman. I will apply myself with aching spirit, but with renewed ardor, to the pursuits of commerce, in order that when I, too, have become rich, she may open her eyes to the mistake she has made, and murmur, 'I should have done better to give her to Filosella.'

"Begging to enclose a prospectus of current prices of the house of Verjus & Tonnelier, wine-merchants, of Paris, whose goods I will guarantee sound; also the description of a new kind of bagpipe, patented by Messrs. Doremi, for whose house I travel, and three of which I have recently sold to Milord Ardcheanochrochan, a Scotch peer of distinction, I have the honor to offer you, Monsieur le Marquis, the assurance of my deepest respect and gratitude,

"HECTOR FILOSELLE."

M. Prosper Macrobe to his Excellency M. Gribaud.

"AVENUE DES CHAMPS ÉLYSÉES, Jan. 21, 1857.

"MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE,—I acknowledge the receipt of the report from the sub-Prefect of Hautbourg, which your Excellency obligingly forwarded to me yesterday. I laid it, as arranged, on a table where it was sure to meet my son-in-law's eye, and he read it after asking me how it came that such a document should have fallen into my possession. I explained that

the sub-Prefect was an acquaintance of mine who had sent me a duplicate of the copy he intended despatching to the Government, in the hope that I would intercede with the Clairefontaine family to do something for the perishing town; 'which,' added I, 'I should not have ventured to do had you not accidentally stumbled upon that report which I had mislaid.' He made no answer; but, during the rest of the evening, he remained pensive, and I could see that those passages of the report in which the sub-Prefect contrasts the now pitiable plight of Hautbourg with its flourishing condition when the Castle of Clairefontaine was tenanted, had produced upon him all the effect which I expected. I need not add—for your Excellency has doubtless been in a position to notice this fact yourself—how surely the great kindness and forbearance of the Government are operating on my son-in-law. I might adduce testimony of this in citing the very words he used when your Excellency, in the name of the Ministry, accepted the slight amendment he moved to a recent Police Bill. He said that 'whatever might be his opinions as to the reigning dynasty, Napoleon III. had a merit not common to his predecessors, that of selecting able ministers.' I have the honor to remain, Monsieur le Ministre, your Excellency's most humble and obedient servant,

"PROSPER MACROBE."

CHAPTER XXV.

A SPEECH, A VOTE, AND A SURPRISE.

It is two o'clock. Luncheon is just over, and a group of five persons are congregated in one of the most sunny morning rooms of the Hôtel Macrobe. The financier, with his brass-bound note-book in his hand, is jotting down the details of some pecuniary transaction in which he does not look as if he had been fleeced. Aunt Dorothee is counting, with an air of woebegone solitude, the patterns on the carpet, as if to divine what average sum in copper money each separate flower must have cost. Beside her on the blue satin sofa her niece unravels a skein of bright worsted which Captain Clarimon, the Crimean hero and her cousin, is holding with docility; and Horace, his back to the mantle-piece, interrupts the silence to read aloud occasional paragraphs out of the newspaper he is skimming.

A footman enters powdered and majes-

tuous, the incarnate image of "eight hundred francs a year and perquisites." "Monsieur le Marquis's horse is at the door," he announced. Horace no longer objects to be called M. le Marquis. Soon after their marriage Angélique — no doubt paternally instructed — remarked that she liked the title Madame la Marquise better than that of Madame Gerold. It was said in the same tone she would have adopted to state her preference for burnt almonds over candied cherries; but from that day Horace had suffered himself to be marquisized without protest. He was not responsible, however, for the sudden and violent eruption of coronets which, after this little uxorial victory, burst upon every article of furniture or piece of plate on which it was possible to paint or engrave these symbols. Even his linen he now noticed had been secretly seized and branded.

At the announcement of the horse Angélique laid down her worsted and ran obligingly to fetch her husband's hat and gloves. She was the same pretty, silent Angélique as of yore. A shade more of timidity in her manner; a fainter shade of gravity on her beautiful face, and that was all.

Captain Clarimon also rose, displaying, when on his legs, a handsome giant six feet high, with bold, military face, mustaches waxed at either end as sharp as spear-points, and hands that must have held a firm grip of the cavalry sabre when cutting down rebel proletaires in the *coup-d'état* affrays, or Russians on the field of Inkermann. Crimean heroes being still the rage at that period, Captain Clarimon had been made welcome at the Hôtel Macrobe, and finding his quarters good, evinced no disposition to desert them.

"So you are off to your legislative duties, Marquis," said he, with more veneration than might have been expected from one who had learned by experience what a poor show an assembly of legislators makes against half a troop of horse.

"Yes," answered Horace, smiling to his wife, and thanking her as he took his hat from her hands. "Yes, Captain, but I don't know what we are going to legislate upon to-day. I have not seen the notice-paper."

"I think it is a colonial question," said M. Macrobe, shutting up his note-book with a well-satisfied snap; "the political régime of Martinique and Guadeloupe."

"Dull countries," remarked the Captain, "and cursed peppery — ahem, I beg pardon, ma belle cousine. I lived in garri-son there."

"Amongst the poor negroes," observed Angélique.

"Ay, the poor negroes who used to be slaves," exclaimed Aunt Dorothée dismally, as if the servitude of the black races had been the canker-worm of her existence.

M. Macrobe on the sly launched a thunderbolt-glance in the direction of Aunt Dorothée, and coughed to drown her misplaced sympathy.

"The negroes — yes, those poor fellows who used to be so happy a few years ago, and who now, by all accounts, are in a miserable state of destitution," ejaculated he.

"That's exactly it" laughed the Captain. "The beggars were happy enough until a number of Deputies, half of whom had never seen a negro, and the other half of whom had never talked to one, laid their heads together to set them free. Up to that time Martinique and Guadeloupe had been flourishing. The negroes were well fed, well housed, and had no more work than was good for them. But, crack! down comes the abolition; and what's the result? Your nigger left to himself won't work at any price. Planters are ruined, trade dries up by the roots, and our two colonies go to the dogs. That's what comes of making laws," added he, sapiently.

"My father was amongst those who agitated for abolition," remarked Horace rather dryly.

"Of course, and quite right too," returned the Captain unabashed. "I am sure I should have voted for emancipating the poor devils; in fact, I'm for emancipating everybody, and letting them all do as they like. But if you'd been to Guadeloupe, I fancy you'd wish they had delayed the experiment until you were past visiting the place again. Why, I have ridden twenty miles along the coast and met not a living soul save three niggers, all stretched on their backs in the sun, and swearing it was too hot to work. Like oysters, 'pon my word."

"Well, as I know very little or nothing about the colonies, perhaps you wouldn't mind riding down to the House with me and enlightening me," said Horace, cheerful again. "One picks up useful waifs in conversation. I will order a second horse to be saddled."

The Captain good-naturedly acquiesced, and so did M. Macrobe, who seemed pleased with the arrangement. A second hack was soon brought round, and the Captain armed himself with a riding-whip.

"Au revoir, child," said Horace, kissing Angélique on the forehead. "What shall you do all the afternoon?"

"Long to see you return," she whispered, with a slight, sweet smile, which brought a ray of pleasure to his eyes, and to her features a little color. "Then, I have my

round of visits to make," added she, submitting to the second kiss with which he rewarded her pretty compliment.

The Captain also took his leave in cousinly style. Selecting by hazard, no doubt, a moment when Horace's back was turned, he said, "Au revoir, charmante cousine," and, bowing, lifted her hand to his lips.

As the gallant warrior was thus engaged, M. Macrobe's eye was fixed upon him with rather a curious expression.

The debate had already commenced when Horace settled into his seat in the House — if debate it can be called, where every honorable gentleman was known to be of the same opinion, and would infallibly vote the same way when the hour of "division" arrived. The Corps Législatif, indeed, had not been created that it might make itself much heard or felt. Its function in the constitutional machinery was to spin as noiselessly as possible; to do its little piece of allotted work in the way prescribed, but just that and no more; above all to avoid clanking, or in any way jarring upon the nerves of its imperial proprietor. The look of the session hall marked its altered destination from what the place had been in days passed by. Where was the tribune whence Royer-Colard had delivered his flashing orations; Manuel, Foy, and Benjamin Constant, hurled their fire; and where Guizot had stood at bay, breasting the attacks of Berryer, Lamartine, and Thiers combined? Gone. Where were the strangers' galleries in which two generations of Frenchmen had trained themselves to love of parliamentary eloquence, to worship of freedom? Where the journalists' box, in which, turn by turn, had sat all the master penmen who had moulded the thoughts of young France — Courier, Carrel, Mignet, Vitel, Sacy, Girardin? Present, but closed. Where the benches on which at one time, and in one array, had figured Victor Hugo and Beranger, Louis Blanc, and Quinet, Montalembert and Lamennais, Arago and Cousin? Present again, but peopled by two hundred and sixty gentlemen of debonnaire aspect and facile manners, with not an idea between them, but plenty of small talk; gentlemen culled pretty much to right and left as we gather mushrooms, from half-ruined estates, from the purlieus of the Stock Exchange, from plethoric, and, consequently, loyal Chambers of Commerce, from the semi-official press, from ministerial back-stairs, last and least, from court. All of which gentlemen had been shoved into the Corps Législatif to do their duty, and did it — voting as they were bid, and roaring very conscientiously, "Hear, hear," when a minister spoke, to the tune of five hundred pounds a year apiece.

As a counterpoise to these two hundred and sixty human and self-acting voting instruments, Horace's seat, slightly isolated from the others, being a little to the left of the President's chair, was the only one which could, by any elasticity of expression short of downright abuse of language, be termed independent.

As Horace entered, an obese legislator was sawing the air with his right hand, proclaiming the reasons which would induce him to vote in favor of the bill — a gratuitous piece of good nature which seemed so entirely superfluous to his colleagues that they serenely busied themselves in different ways and didn't listen to him. A large proportion of honorable members were writing their private letters, a good number more sprawling with legs outstretched, hands deep in pockets, and countenances upverted with a beatific gaze at the skylight, were sleeping the sleep of the just. Four or five, whom you had fancied poring with absorbed interest over statistical blue-books, were palpitating over the incidents of a steeple-chase at Chantilly, described in the usual graphic language by a reporter of "Le Sport;" and a pair who kept their backs turned to the rest of the world, and were pushing white bits of something composedly towards each other, looked suspiciously as if they were playing at dominoes.

Horace was soon surrounded in his seat — colleagues in squads came smirking up to kill time with a little quiet chat until the rising of the House. He was not unpopular, the Member for Paris. Deputies fat and lean, jovial and bilious, broke into smiles as he passed them. In the lobbies he reaped as many hat-salutes and shakes of the hand as he knew what to do with.

The prevailing notion was, that although independent, which was certainly a point against him, he was not dangerous, and might be trusted.

A canine-visaged deputy, with a rasping voice and a nose like a fig, said pleasantly:

"Shall we have the satisfaction of hearing you to-day, Monsieur le Marquis? A debate in which I take some interest. Was a planter myself in the good times."

"In the time of slavery?"

"Precisely. I had five hundred slaves, and devilish contented they were. Never cowdied them except when they deserved it. Within three years of the abolition half of them were underground; floated themselves to the deuce on rivers of rum. Ah! the rascals."

"I do think it's so absurd to talk of niggers as human beings," giggled a young viscount with features livid from long vigils and hair in curl. "The Marquise de Ver-

meillon had a negro page she dressed in red, and an ape she put in blue—confoundedly *rococo* she was, the Marquise. And I used to say to her, 'Marquise, if those two exchange clothes I shall be giving sugar-plums to Snowball—this was the nigger—and my card to Adonis—this was the ape. Hee, hee, hee,' " Everybody laughed. This was very funny.

"I lost a million francs by the abolition," resumed the fig-nosed planter, in a voice like that of a nutmeg on a grater, "but the colony lost more. Chaps that didn't understand any thing about the niggers' interest, nor about anybody else's; those that suppressed slavery. Why, isn't there slavery in all countries more or less? Look at our peasants who are taken by the Conscription at twenty, made to serve seven years, and risk being shot into the bargain. The niggers risked nothing, there wasn't a cleaner, happier lot going; why, it was like a prime concert to see 'em squat in a row and whistle in the sun. Then we used to marry 'em"—

"Yes," grinned the young viscount; "and I've heard of a nigger who was henpecked like fun, until one lucky day his wife was sold to one master and he to another. That's an advantage that wouldn't have been open to him if he'd been a free Frenchman. Once spliced with us whites it's always spliced."

More merriment, interrupted this time, however, by the sudden close of the obese member's speech. At this the House woke up for a moment and burst cordially, and without a moment's hesitation, into unanimous cheering. The members who were writing their letters, those who slept with their countenances heavenwards, those who were palpitating over the prose of the sporting-writer, and the pair who played dominoes, all looked up and shouted defiantly, "Hear, hear!" as if there were an invisible opposition making itself obstreperous on the benches of the Left and requiring to be put down. Then the President, a dapper statesman, ornamented with a red ribbon and star, consulted a list on his table, and called out to another deputy to rise and say something. It was very much indeed like a schoolmaster crying, "Boy Duval, stand up and construe."

Unfortunately for the regularity of the proceedings, the honorable gentleman appeared to was absent, having been taken ill in the morning; so was the next member on the list, who had been summoned away by telegraph at early dawn to bury a relative; and the third deputy whose name the President called was not yet arrived—whence an unexpected hitch. These debates, to tell the truth, were all

mapped out beforehand, like the programmes of a musical entertainment. In order that a sceptic public might have no handle for murmuring that honorable members did small work for their 500*l.* per annum, M. Gribaud, the Minister, and his Excellency the President, provided between them that no bill should be sent up to the Crown without a decent amount of preliminary speechifying to season it withal. They recruited talkative members—those preferred who had the great art of saying nothing, and putting it into a good many words. It would be arranged that Monsieur A. should get up and talk from two till a quarter past, that Monsieur B. should follow him from the quarter to the half hour, and that when Messieurs C., D., and E. had each had their twenty minutes' or half-hour's turn, according as they felt in condition, Monsieur Gribaud himself should rise—towards five or thereabouts—reduce all their arguments to powder, prevail upon them to withdraw their suggestions or amendments, which they were not likely to object to do, and get the bill voted by acclamation in time for everybody to be home and dressing for dinner at six. Now, when Messieurs C., D., and E. all failed to come up to time together, it was tantamount to what the unforeseen eclipse of the tenor, bass, and baritone at one of Monsieur Hertz's morning performances would have been. Some little consternation ensued. The honorable gentlemen who were writing their private letters nibbled the ends of their quills, the pair who played dominoes looked guiltily apprehensive lest they should be dragged out of their retirement and forced to speak whether they liked it or not; Monsieur Gribaud, who had been sitting with his arms folded and his head drooping on his chest, in apparent slumber—though of all men in the room he was certainly the most wide-awake, drew out his watch, but seeing it yet wanted two hours to six, put it back again and frowned. What was to be done? Propriety scarcely admitted of the Minister making a general appeal for somebody to devote himself, and it would not have concurred with the dignity of a legislative council for the President to exclaim, "I vow nobody shall go out of here until I get my three speeches." In this emergency all eyes sought Horace. What is the use of an Opposition member if he be not prepared to spout by the hour at half a minute's notice?

So, drawn by that magnetic attraction which brings orators to their legs, Horace, without well knowing what he did, rose, and an instantaneous sigh of relief went round. He had not in the least made up

his mind as to what he should say, neither had he caught a dozen words of what the last speaker had uttered—moreover, he was not quite clear as to what the bill's scope was. These were disadvantages; but, being a Frenchman every inch, they did not appall him as they might have done the scion of a less glib-tongued race. Certes, there was a difference between the young man who had stammered the first phrases of his maiden speech before the judges of the Police Correctionnelle and the coolly confident deputy of the people. The confidence of twenty thousand voters must make a man self-trusting if any thing will. Horace began by running his hands through his hair, which seems to be a physical necessity with most Parisian speakers, and then, without hesitation, started into a retrospective survey of the history of the French colonial empire, which would be sure to be appropriate. He alluded to Duplex and Lally-Tollendal; compared La Peyrouse with Cook, somewhat to the disparagement of the latter; grew lyrical over Montcalm and the fall of Quebec; and towered to patriotic heights when describing how "the fairest jewels of our colonial crown" had been reft away by the avidity of a nation now at peace with us. This brought him to the negroes, and the question of compulsory and gratuitous instruction; which, like the Messrs. Somebody's pills, appears to be the panacea for all evils known and unknown. "The negroes were lazy and allowed our colonies to be ruined; why was that? Because they were not educated. If the negro were taught to read, and gratified with a free press to develop his liberal culture, not a doubt that he would take to work with an ardent zeal. Commerce would re-flourish under his efforts, and France would show herself in colonial prosperity, as in other things, to be the mistress of the world." This conclusion was hailed, as it deserved to be, with loud, long, and general applause, for the great merit of the speech was that, although nobody had understood it, it had occupied a good hour in delivery. All that now remained was for M. Gribaud to reply, which he did with adroitness, declaring he should not fail to remember the suggestion of his honorable friend, and that the question of negro instruction would for the future be foremost amongst those involving his most attentive consideration. Whereupon there was more cheering, enthusiastic and long continued; the question was put from the chair, and carried *nem. con.*; the pens, newspapers, blotting-books, and dominions were stowed away, and everybody went home to dinner, France being the richer by a bill, and the Corps Législatif

the happier for three speeches. Such is civilization.

In the lobby, going out, Horace was joined by the Planter, who, raspingly and bluffly as ever, said, "Fine words, Monsieur le Marquis, and a good deal of body in 'em too, I don't doubt. Only, in practice, reading and writing don't any more change the nigger's nature than soap can whiten his skin. I've been to Jamaica and there seen model schools built a good many years ago by an Englishman named Guineaman"—

"Guineaman!" interrupted Horace, with a start, for he recalled the name of his uncle's wife, the woman whose slave-earned money had restored Clairefontaine, and set a lasting stigma of indignity on it.

"Yes, a slave-trader," returned the fig-nosed planter carelessly, "but, like all Englishmen, one who kept the Bible in his tail-coat pocket and called it his compass. When he walloped a nigger he took care to quote the chapter and verse that gave him authority, and I believe he wouldn't have exceeded forty stripes, save one, for any money."

"A hypocrite?"

"Wa'al, no, it's bred in the grain. Those English who are pr-ractical have discovered that they can do a good many more queer things by citing the Bible than we Fr-rench can do without it. But I didn't know this Monsieur Guineaman; he was dead and gone long before my time. They used to talk about him at Jamaica, though, and showed the schools he built when he'd made his fortune; for it was his theory that slavery being lawful—for the Government didn't for-bid it then no more does the Bible now—he'd just as much right to turn an honest penny that way as anybody else, provided, of course, he didn't bully his niggers, which I think good morals. The-re-for-re, as I say, he opened schools and preaching-houses to make the beggars lively, just as I at Martinique being Fr-rench, set up dancing-booths to the same end. Only, my dancing-booths turned up tr-rumps and Monsieur Guineaman's schools didn't. The niggers danced jigs fast enough, but he hanged if they loved r-reading and writing any more than hoeing and digging. It's not in the nature of the varmin'."

Which wise commentary brought the two legislators to the door of egress where both found their broughams. The fig-nosed planter wedged himself snugly into his and was whirled away to one of those banquets which kept his physiognomy in such perpetual glow; Horace was going to follow suit, and had already one foot on his brougham step, when a familiar equipage, drawn

by two superb bays, and driven with right British science, came like a hurricane down the Quai d'Orsay, ten yards off where he was standing, whirling up a spray of mud-drops and flint-sparks on its passage. The driver was the Prince of Arcola, who recognized him, and instantly reined in his steeds with consummate skill, clattering and champing on the haunches.

"This is a lucky meeting. I will give you a lift."

"With pleasure," said Horace, who was always glad to see the Prince; and he scrambled into the phaeton, which, as soon as released by the two cockaded grooms who had sprung to the horses' head, sped merrily on its course again.

"I have been on a call to some old friends of yours," said the Prince, as they debouched into the Champs Elysées with a speed that made the gaslights flit past them like flakes of fire thrown up by an engine in motion.

"I have almost as many friends as enemies now, Prince," was the smiling answer.

"I mean the Pochemolles."

"I have not seen them for an age," said Horace, with interest. "I heard last month they were going to retire, but when I went to congratulate M. Pochemolle on his rise in the ladder, he had already removed. They are all well, I hope, and the good draper is not yet counter-sick?"

"They are installed at Meudon," rejoined the Prince without smiling. "The villa is a pretty one, devoid of vulgarity, the dwelling of an honest man who retires on a loyally-earned competence. Both Monsieur and Madame Pochemolle are very well."

"And Georgette?" inquired Horace, after a moment's silence, though looking with something of archness at his interlocutor.

As if he had been expecting the question, the Prince quivered slightly. He did not immediately reply, but lashed his horses nervously into a faster trot. Then abruptly he turned his face full on Horace's and said: "Gerold, I have been wanting for the last twelve months to put you a question, but have never dared — you will guess why, perhaps, some day. Tell me now, on your word, between man and man, has there ever been any thing between you and Georgette?"

Horace, though he had long suspected the Prince of paying a more or less avowable court to the draper's daughter, was little prepared for the attack, and changed color.

"Nothing of any importance," said he, evasively, and rather trying to laugh off the subject.

"Then there *has* been something," muttered the Prince, and it seemed to Horace that he turned pale.

"I swear to you that, so far as I know and believe, Georgette is a virtuous girl, if that is what you mean," he said.

The Prince seemed relieved; but musingly he exclaimed: "Then what is the significance of her flaming up as she does whenever your name is mentioned?"

Horace wondered. Why Georgette should thus flame up was to him inexplicable except under the hypothesis that she was an extremely forward person. He had not forgotten the whimsical display of spleen to which she had treated him a few months before, when the report of his marriage was beginning to gain ground; but this was a thing of the past now, which he was fain to dismiss from his mind as not worth brooding over. Besides, a woman's fair fame is a thing against which a man with the least spark of feeling is so loath to breathe a careless word, even when he has cause for suspicion and motives of personal rancor, that Horace checked himself on the point of making a rejoinder that would have reflected slightly on Georgette's conduct towards him, and answered guardedly: "As her father's lodger, I frequently saw Mdlle. Georgette, and it may be that by occasional civilities, by those unmeaning compliments which we men pay without attaching any weight to them, I suffered my intentions to be misinterpreted. In this case the blame would be mine, not Mdlle. Georgette's, and she might feel some resentment at what may seem to her to have been levity on my part. This is the explanation I suggest."

"And that is all that passed between you — positively all?"

"That is all."

"Well, you have taken a load off me," murmured the Prince, with an unaffected sigh. He flicked an invisible speck of dust off his near horse's collar, and looked as though he meant what he said.

"But tell me now, in your turn, why you catechize me like this?" inquired Horace, not without raillery, as his former not very charitable misgivings as to the Prince's own designs upon Georgette recurred to him.

They were not above a hundred yards' distance from the Hôtel Macrobe, and the phaeton was still going like wildfire. The Prince said: "Repeat to me once more what you affirmed about Georgette's blamelessness."

"I do; I affirm her entirely blameless, upon my word," said Horace earnestly.

"Well, then," answered the Prince with gravity, "if Mdlle. Georgette will do me the honor to accept me, I will make her my wife."

Horace looked quickly round, as if his first thought was that the Prince was jok-

ing. But M. d'Arcola was perfectly composed. He spoke as if he had just announced his coming marriage to a princess of his own rank.

CHAPTER XXV.

A RECOGNITION.

THE Prince's communication ought to have left Horace indifferent, but somehow it did not. Let those explain this who, having ever formed the manly resolution not to love a girl because she was poor, or low-born, or any thing else uneligible, find these scruples accounted as nought by others richer, higher, and prouder than themselves. Horace was aware that there was not a living man who would have shrunk more sensitively from a mésalliance than the Prince of Arcola. But, apparently, his notions of a mésalliance were not those of the common world.

At dinner, without alluding to the circumstance, Horace asked his wife whether she had yet called on the Pochemolles at their new residence.

"Perhaps it would be civil," said he pensively, "as they sent us a letter, mentioning they were going to move."

"I will call, dear, if you wish it," answered Angélique in her tranquil voice; "but I could not do so before, for they gave no address."

"M. d'Arcola tells me they are at Meudon," said Horace.

"Very wise of them to choose the country," remarked M. Macrobe: "pure air, broad fields, life healthy and cheap."

"And shooting for those who can shoot," chimed in the Crimean hero.

"And shooting, as you say, Captain," assented his uncle.

For some time past it had become a sort of mania with M. Macrobe to depict rural bliss. Virgil never took greater pains to vaunt the charms of a rustic life, the sweet breath of kine, the scent of new-mown hay, and the unadulterated purity of country milk and butter than did the financier. Especially was it good to hear him hold forth on the pride and pomp of a manorial estate, the waving acres, the wagons groaning under loads of storied sheaves, the rows of peasants bowing with glad homage before their lord, and the turreted castle gleaming majestuously in the summer sun over river, field, and wood. Angélique, as if repeating a music lesson, would take up this pastoral in a minor key, say-

ing that she adored the country, and would "so like to have a small castle where they might spend the autumn." Captain Clarimon, not less bucolic, opined that a great noble should slaughter winged fowl on a grandiose scale, organize battues that would muster a whole country side, and run down a stag now and then with accompaniment of horn-tooting to stir up the minds of the clodhoppers.

That was a true saying of the ancients: *Gutta cavat lapidem, non vi, sed sæpe cadendo*. Under the frequency of these Georgic aspersions Horace was imperceptibly beginning to feel that the man who had no landed property, nor horned cattle, nor preserves, had missed the pre-ordained purpose of existence. To be sure, he might have purchased all these things on the very morrow with his wife's dowry had it pleased him. But he did not look upon this money as his. At her marriage M. Macrobe had given his daughter two millions and a half of francs, but Horace had insisted they should stand in Angélique's own name on the books of the *Crédit Parisien*, and be tied down absolutely to her by contract: and there he meant to leave them, never claiming the privilege of touching a centime. Besides, his notions of an enviable demesne were not associated with a brand-new estate, cut out to order and bought with ready money. When he thought of the matter the towers of Clairefontaine rose vaguely before him—Clairefontaine which might have been his, had his relative Guineaman made his fortune by swindling his contemporaries under the rose, instead of selling them openly in the broad light of day.

"Everybody likes the country," he remarked mechanically, in answer to M. Macrobe's observation.

It was Italian Opera night, and, on leaving the dining-room, Angélique was cloaked in a flowing white *burnous* by the attentive Crimean hero, who was continually and jealously on the watch to render little services. The same warrior brought the opera-glass, and took Angélique's fan into his special custody. He also made himself useful in fastening those six button gloves which ladies were then inaugurating, and which, had they existed in the time of Job, might have added one more to that sorely-vexed patriarch's trials of patience.

"You will take me to the opera, won't you, Horace?" asked Angélique, helplessly surrendering her small wrists to the gallant Captain.

"Yes, dear," answered Horace with the docility characteristic of husbands during the first year of their marriage; and he inquired what opera it was.

"I think it's *Don Giovanni*."

"Oh, dear!" sighed Aunt Dorothée, whose venerable head was crowned with an assortment of limp feathers that gave her the appearance of a demoralized bustard. "That's the play where the stage opens up and swallows a living being in the flames. You'll come away before that happens, won't you, dear? I'm always afraid to see that young man burn his clothes."

"You shall come away when you like, aunt dear," promised Angélique. "Are you ready, Horace?"

Horace was ready, and so was the Captain, who, as in duty bound, offered the Marquise his arm. But as they all sailed out together, with the exception of M. Macrobe, who participated in the belief of M. Alphonse Karr that music is but the most expensive of all noises, a servant announced "Monsieur Emile," and this upset the arrangements. Horace, not over sorry to be relieved from four hours' stewing in a grand tier box, settled to join his wife later in the evening, the Crimean hero meanwhile undertaking to guard her under his valiant protection.

"The night is so fine that Emile and I will walk down," said Horace; "and I will be with you about the second act."

"And will you come too, Emile?" asked Angélique a little timidly, for she never brought herself without hesitation to call her grave young brother-in-law by his Christian name.

"I am scarcely in opera attire, sister," he answered kindly. "I only looked in on the chance of finding Horace disengaged, but I blame myself for monopolizing him in this way."

"Oh! you are quite right to come, brother, but you should let us see you oftener, and be here earlier, so as to dine with us."

She said this amiably, glancing up a little to her husband for approval, for she knew it was the surest way to please him to show civility to his brother. Then she held out her tiny hand to Emile, which he shook, thanking her.

"Well, old fellow, it's a long while since we two took an evening walk like this," began Horace, as he and Emile paced together arm-in-arm.

They were in the Champs Elysées, under the crystal dome of a clear sky, blue with the dark-blue of night, and irradiated by a moon of such silvery brightness that it made the gaslights look like dull red dots. Paris shows well on such nights, when the trees throw long lace-pattern shadows on the pavements, rows of fair white mansions gleam like polished marble, and lovers

stroll in pairs, whispering that *Je l'aime* which is of daily use in none but the "Latin" tongues.

"Do you remember those pleasant walks," continued Horace, "when we first came to Paris, three years ago? It seems like ten years off. We worked all day, often half the night, but now and then we gave ourselves a holiday, and took it out like this, wandering about the streets and guessing at the future. How gay they appeared to me then, the streets; and what smiles I used to see on the faces of the passers-by! Paris always struck me as a perpetual fair. Ah, those were the happy times!"

"But you are happy now, Horace?"

"Oh, yes!"

And there was a pause.

"But tell me about yourself," added Horace, breaking off from some internal reflection which had brought a flitting frown to his brow. "Let me look at you—you grow paler and paler. Why do you work so much, eh? Everybody talks of your indefatigableness. A judge told me the other night that if he had worked as you do at his age he would have been a Chief Justice of Appeal by this time."

"Then, you see, work does lead to something," smiled Emile.

"Ah, but my judge added the proviso: 'Or I should have been in my coffin,' which didn't re-assure me."

"I don't feel as if I were near my coffin, dear fellow. Pale men, like threatened men, live long."

"And you are happy in your way, and satisfied?"

"Why should I not be?"

"But you have no ambition, restlessness, eagerness to outpass somebody, or do something before the appointed time? I sometimes marvel at your calmness; we don't seem to be moulded out of the same clay."

"I suppose everybody has his small beacon of ambition beckoning him, Horace, but I fancy the surest way of attaining it is by plainly following the beaten track. It may be the longest road, but cuts across country often lead one into quagmires."

A short silence, and then they reached the Rue de Rivoli, that noblest of modern streets, with its half-mile colonnade, forum of foreigners, *Via Sacra* of hotel-keepers. Broughams glanced along the broad highway, bearing muffled forms to theatre and routs. Unbroken lines of flaming jets, intensified by dazzling reflectors, flooded the arches with light. Spaniards, Americans, Germans, Englishmen, sauntered up and down, smoking their after-dinner cigars, and examining the accumulated treasures of the shops.

"What wealth!" exclaimed Horace

"Paris has indeed under this reign become Cosmopolis. But, now, I wonder"—and he laughed—"I wonder if all these people we see here, and all the people in the shops there, were suddenly to sit down and say, 'We will make restitution of every franc that we have ever unduly earned, and of every franc that our fathers before us unduly earned and bequeathed to us in inheritance;' and supposing some power of another sphere were to inspire them with the faculty of making a faultless estimate of these sums—I wonder, I say, when the balance had been struck, how many of these persons we behold congregated from all the corners of the globe would have money enough left to smoke their cigars, or to keep those sumptuous shops going."

"What can have put such a thought as that into your head?" asked Emile, astonished. "This is disquieting philosophy."

"I was thinking about the nice discussions we barristers could raise as to what was honest gold and what was not. Given two men with large fortunes and relatives to inherit them. The first has been, say, a wine-merchant, and has conscientiously mixed his wines with logwood and water for a stated series of years. The second has with integrity followed a trade, which, during his lifetime, was lawful, but which was prohibited later, though even then opinions were divided respecting it. Now, which is the cleaner money of the two; that of the wine-merchant who regaled the public with a purple decoction at fancy prices, or that of the other man, who, pursuing a doubtful trade, yet conducted it according to his lights, straightforwardly?"

"I should like to hear more about the doubtful trade," answered Emile, quietly. "There are possibly in this crowd some police-spies from the Prefecture, sent out to worm themselves into the confidence of unsuspecting men, trap them into anti-Bonapartist utterances, and get them transported to Cayenne. As times go, the trade is a lawful one, but I should be sorry to finger any of its profits."

"Naturally. You speak like the good fellow you are. Still, I ask myself how many men would feel bound to do what we have done, and renounce the estate where their fathers lived because it had been bought back after arbitrary confiscation, with the money of a dealer who—well, who did what the custom of those days perfectly sanctioned."

This was the first time since many a long month that Horace so much as alluded to a subject which Emile had dismissed from his own mind once and for all as not admitting of discussion. Emile looked at his brother with an expression in which sudden

surprise and dismay were painfully blended, and it was in quite an altered voice that he said: "You are surely not regretting a sacrifice that was made of your own free will, Horace?"

"Not in the least. No, there's no regret whatever," and Horace laughed again in an off-hand way, though somewhat constrainedly. "To begin with, our father made the sacrifice before us, and I know he would take it so much to heart if either of us abandoned our resolution, that I wouldn't assume the responsibility even if I had changed my mind. But I haven't—no—so don't be alarmed. I was only speaking on supposition—supposing there were two other men placed in our predicament, and you and I were commenting on what they ought to do, I think, then, the case might afford scope for argument. That's all."

And argue it they did, walking slowly during two hours through the streets, often retracing their steps, occasionally stopping altogether; the one conversing with animation but simulated unconcern, the other too much troubled to say all he would have said had he felt the debate to be as hypothetical a one as his brother would have had it seem. At eleven they stood outside the Opera House, and the theme was not yet exhausted; for, bidding each other good-night under the portico of the theatre, Horace said, a little flushed, but cheerfully: "Mind, old fellow, all this is purely speculative; talk to while away the time and nothing else. It was our walk set me thinking of Clairefontaine. You recollect our visit there; that old woman who showed us over the place, our ovation when we returned to the worthy town, and the stones with which the good people pelted us in guise of *pax vobiscum* to the railway-station. It was just such a night as this. By the way, you hear oftener from Brussels than I do: our father was quite well, at the last writing?"

"Quite well, thank God."

"I will write to him myself in a day or two. But his letters to me are sad; they give one the idea that he is suffering. Well, good-night, dear fellow, and mind what I repeat, this evening's chat has been words, nothing more."

"Good-night, Horace."

They shook hands and parted; but had Horace followed his brother round the corner of the street, he would have seen that, collected as Emile had been all the evening, tears started to his eyes as soon as his brother's back was turned, and that he walked home with the lagging step of one who had received a blow, whose faith in a loved being has been shaken.

Horace was conducted by a bustling at-

tendant to the box of *Mdme. la Marquise de Clairefontaine*. A prima-donna was indulging in terrific screams under pretence of singing, and the audience hung spell-bound on the enchanting sounds. The fig-nosed planter, alone, whom Horace descried slumbering in a pit-tier lodge under the mutely reproachful eye of *Mrs. Planter*, appeared to protest by his attitude against this manner of spending an evening. Every part of the house was crowded, and the Italian Opera being the only theatre in which the play-going Frenchwoman will unveil her shoulders, and the Frenchman submit to the tyranny of swallow-tails, the effect was not bad.

"Do you recognize any one you know?" asked Angélique, prettily, making way for Horace on the chair beside her, which the Crimean hero had vacated on his entrance.

Angélique's large, limpid eyes were always so intently fixed when uttering the simplest questions, that Horace detected nothing unusually attentive in their gaze on this occasion.

"Let me see, dear child," he said, taking her glass. "On the tier above there's *Mdme. de Margauld*; is that who you mean? a pretty woman, and dresses sensibly; then there's *Mdme. de Masseline*, wife of my co-deputy. They say her pin-money comes from the Prefecture, where she carries all that she picks up in society. I refuse to believe it, though, for you ladies malign one another mercilessly, and it was a lady gave me that pretty piece of scandal. Then there's the Austrian ambassadress, and *Mdme. Cora*, the dancer, costumed with infinitely more propriety than her Excellency, and *Mdme. Gribaud* — why, yes, dear child, I recognize everybody. But there's not a face" — restoring the glass and nodding with a smile, "more pretty, or a dress more tasteful than those of some one whose name you may guess."

"Look again," said Angélique, her mild eyes calmly, inquiringly intent as before. "There, almost opposite us."

Horace looked again, and this time his researches were guided by several pairs of eyes in the stalls converging towards one point, a box where shone a truly imperial beauty. She was the most striking face in the house; but it took Horace some seconds to rally his fluttering impressions, and to grasp who it was. *Georgette*!

"Their coming in caused quite a sensation during the first entr'acte," pursued Angélique, quietly; but she never withdrew her eyes from her husband, who now did not put down the glass. "Everybody seems to admire her."

"Reminds me of those Georgian beauties whom I saw at Constantinople; lustrous

faces, scarlet lips, and dark hair," struck in the Crimean hero; "but I prefer blonde features."

In spite of himself, Horace's gaze seemed riveted. The box was occupied by *Madame Pochemolle* and the draper, but these excellent people, not knowing much of etiquette, had given the place of honor to their daughter. In the background the Prince of Arcola was dimly recognizable. *Georgette* was pensively rapt in the music, but at intervals she turned to answer some remark of the Prince's, or bent her head with modest grace in token that she was listening to him. Could this be the *Georgette* of the Rue Ste. Geneviève? Was it possible that a few yards of silk and a trinket or two had been able to convert the humble girl of the linen-shop into a beauty out-vying all the most courted women of the chief city of cities? When Horace put down the glass it was with a slight tremor of the hand.

"Is she not beautiful?" said Angélique, in whose voice no unaccustomed inflection was noticeable, at least to her husband.

"Yes — that is, no — I find her altered a little, improved, perhaps," answered Horace, affecting an indifference which his reverie-struck mood belied.

"Good gracious!" dolefully exclaimed Aunt Dorothee, at this opportune juncture. "Here is that dreadful Statue come to take that young man down into the flames. My dear, I was quite unwell last time I saw this."

"Well, madame, we will leave then," said Horace, at once rising. "Angélique, child, shall we go?"

"Yes, dear," she murmured simply, and there was a putting on of cloaks and screwing down of opera-glasses, which called into play the Crimean hero's chivalry, and filled up a minute. During that minute, after assisting in the swathing of his aunt, Horace came to the front of the box and gazed again across the house. His glance may have been charged with something of electricity, for *Georgette* almost instantly looked up and saw him. But had he been a stranger seen for the first time, had he been one of those curly-pated dandies in the stalls, one of the box-openers in the lobbies, one of the chorus-singers on the stage, her expression could not have been more stony, more coldly unconscious. She turned her head away without vouchsafing a mark of recognition, either unfriendly or the reverse. Horace turned away too, and drew out his handkerchief to wipe away a drop of moisture from his brow. As he did so he observed the cipher on his handkerchief. It was one of those which *Georgette* had embroidered for him as a gift two years before.

CHAPTER XXVI.

PRINCE COPHETUA'S WOOING.

THE Prince of Arcola's mansion was remarkable for other things besides the architectural perfections which made it one of the finest in a capital where, Revolution and Equality aiding, the only fine palaces extant are those belonging to Government; the rest of mankind lodging themselves in edifices showy enough when looked at by the hundred, but separately, cramped and partaking of the doll-house. The Hôtel d'Arcole had an essentially English aspect, which it owed to the Anglophilist tastes of its proprietor, and to the valuable counsels of the eminent Mr. Drydust, who had laid himself out to show the Prince, his friend, what the dwelling of a British noble ought to be, and had done so with success. An air of home greeted the invader. The floors both in corridors and rooms were covered with carpets; nobody was exposed to come down flat over superlatively polished boards as slippery as glazed frost. The doors all shut properly, which French-made doors do not, the Gallic workman being particular about the trim look of his panels and the smooth roundness of his handles, but careless as to his hinges and lintels. Then you saw branching antlers and trophies of hunting-whips in the vestibules; bound books on the tables (not those disastrous *brochures* which tumble to pieces in one's hands); and the walls teemed with the works of British artists in oil and water-color; for the Prince dearly loved English landscapes, and sporting cracks, and was a little severe upon the artists of his own country, saying that unless you gave them women to paint they were fit for nothing.

On the morrow, however, of the *Don Giovanni* night at the opera, the Prince might have been detected in the un-English act of putting himself into dress clothes at eleven o'clock in the morning. And he did this gravely, for the business he had before him is never a light one in any country, and in France is generally attended with a certain degree of ceremony — the asking a lady's hand of her parents.

Yes, he had taken the resolution to seal his fate that day; and as he adjusted his speckled white cravat in the looking-glass, said to himself, what so many have muttered before him, and so many since — that in another couple of hours he should be the most fortunate or the wretchedest of men. Not that he had any reason to foresee that he should be the wretchedest; this did not appear likely, but a little modesty never

comes amiss. It ought, perhaps, to be mentioned that there is no binding necessity for a Frenchman about to call upon his prospective father-in-law to attire himself in black. Aristocratic fathers-in-law are content to regard many-hued trousers and buff-dogskins as sufficient evidences of the intention to render their daughters happy; but the bourgeoisie cling more fondly to venerable traditions. It was certain that M. Pochemolle must have plighted his troth to Madame Pochemolle in a dress coat, and the Prince was but evincing his natural tact in seeking to avoid in any way hurting the worthy man's sense of the becoming. In addition to the staidness of his apparel, the Prince had determined that his equipage would have a suitable degree of solemnity. He had ordered round his family coach, which habitually saw service only at the burial of his kinsmen, and was an imposing vehicle with hammer-cloth, four coronetted lamps, and room behind for two vassals with cocked hats to overawe the populace and staves to keep them at a distance.

The Prince was ministered to by a valet of such unmistakable British complexion that one would have sworn he had answered to some such advertisement as this; "Wanted a man with red whiskers and a stiff shirt-collar. Must have an impassive mien, drop his n's with dignity, always look as if he had just been brushing his hair, and say, 'Yes, my lord,' in a tone of well-bred composure. It is indispensable that this individual should tacitly, but firmly decline having any language but his own imposed upon him, and should distinctly object to adopt either the diet, habits, or sentiments of the foreigners amongst whom he may reside." This loftily spruce gentleman stood behind his master holding white gloves, crush-hat, and perfumed handkerchief; and the Prince conversed with him, wielding his English with the intrepidity of a nobleman who read his "Times" every morning and really understood four-fifths of it.

"I am right, like this, Bateson?"

"Yes, my lord."

"And the cravat goes well?"

"Yes, my lord."

"I think, Bateson, I will wear my rosette; this occasion is exceptional."

Bateson extracted from the dressing-case a rosette the size of a Napoleon, and presenting a combination of colors. The Prince had been decorated for an act of courage performed when almost a boy in saving somebody's life at the risk of his own; but he never sported this order, for which half his countrymen would have given their ears; nor two others less striking.

one conferred by the mighty monarch of Monaco, in whose principality he had won with éclat a gentleman-rider steeple-chase, and the other by the grand potentate of Baden, as a reward, perhaps, for once breaking the bank in that serenely gambling duchy.

"Now, Bateson, it is well," said the Prince, fastening the rosette to his button-hole. "For what hour have you commanded the coach?"

"For half-past eleven, my lord."

"And it is now?—Mon Dieu, it is only eleven five! The time seems long when the heart beats."

At the moment when the Prince was emitting this aphorism, some similar reflection, though suggested by different causes, was possibly obtruding itself upon three at least out of the four members of the Pochemolle family. It is all very well to give up business and establish one's self at Meudon, but the difficulty is to devise the wherewith to make the hours pass, when one has been used all one's life to measure calico, and finds one's self suddenly deprived of that occupation. M. Pochemolle, with a newspaper under his arm, which he had read and reread, advertisements and shipping intelligence included, was asking himself what on earth he should do to bridge over the interval between the *déjeuner à la fourchette*, just over, and the dinner, yet five hours distant. An immense garden-hat that covered his honest head, gave him the appearance of a melancholy mushroom as he meditated this proposition. Madame Pochemolle, with less reason to vex herself, seeing that she had her household cares to attend to, and the never-failing resource of slipper-working when those were deficient, nevertheless thought that there were days when the Rue Ste. Geneviève, with its ceaseless flow of customers, its lively gossip of all that was going on in Paris, and the hum of the great city, audible without, was not always such a very dull residence. Of course, she would have suffered herself to be tortured by the rack sooner than acknowledge, even internally, that she regretted the Rue Ste. Geneviève; only her opinion was that if M. Pochemolle had been "a little less in a hurry to remove into the country," if he had postponed his retirement for, say, another year or so, it would have done no harm. Note that the good draper had only been driven to retire after the most energetic and valiant resistance on his part. Domestic strife had raged long and ardently; and Madame Pochemolle had only carried her point by shedding tears, and exclaiming she saw M. Pochemolle was brutally bent on condemn-

ing her and her children to a life of drudgery. But ladies have short memories for these kinds of particulars.

As for M. Alcibiade Pochemolle, the exaltation of his sire to the *rentier* class had opened before him an endless vista of leisure hours, which he had immediately inaugurated by a series of walks from one extremity of the capital to the other. After a fortnight, however, these excursions had become slightly monotonous, partly from being conducted in tight, new boots, partly because M. Alcibiade was forced to stride alone, his former friends, who had not risen to fortune simultaneously with himself, being busy behind their several counters till long after the going down of the sun. So M. Alcibiade now spent his days at Meudon, where small occurrences assumed giant proportions in his eyes. The falling down of a chimney, the escape of a neighbor's rabbit, the discovery of a mole-hill dug furtively during the night under the shelter of a wall-flower, gave him subjects for reflection, and varied, if not always entertaining, talk until it was bedtime. And a true godsend was afforded him when three workmen, in fustian and with pick-axes, for all the world like Paris workmen, came and took up the road in the vicinity of the villa Pochemolle, in order to lay down a water-pipe. M. Alcibiade, perched upon a garden-mound, followed their movements with absorbed interest, like a Layard watching the excavations of Nineveh, and he was thus intent when suddenly his vision was dazzled, and his voice uprose, shrill and amazed.

"My eye! here's a swell turn-out coming down the Paris road. Coachman with a wig on, horses with gold-plated harness—what steppers, and what a dust! It's one of the Court nobs going somewhere. No. Eh, by jingo! I say, father, mother, blessed if it ain't stopping here!"

M. Alcibiade stood dumb-stricken on his mound. Madame and M. Pochemolle looked up bewildered, but instinctively began, the former to smoothe her gown, the latter to rumple his necktie in a wild and distracting effort to make it sit straight. Who could it be? But they were not kept long in suspense, for the maid-servant, arriving with the air of one who heralds something startling and incomprehensible, said: "Monsieur the Prince of Arcola."

Although the visits of the Prince were sufficiently frequent to give him the character of an established friend of the house, yet his name was never announced without causing pleasurable emotions to the draper and his wife. M. Pochemolle was relieved from all solicitude about the flight of time, which sped by fast enough when the

amiable nobleman was there to chat and to listen, for, above all, the Prince was a capital listener, and Madame Pochemolle liked the finished manners and pleasant smile of M. d'Arcola. Being, moreover, never quite able to forget that he was a prince, and a rich one, she enjoyed these advantages twice as much as if he had possessed finished manners and a pleasant smile, but been some one else, not a prince, and not rich — which is only natural.

On the present occasion, however, it was at once evident, both to M. and Madame Pochemolle, that the Prince of Arcola had not come to chat, or to make himself simply agreeable. His mien was too serious, his deportment too ceremonious, and Madame Pochemolle's matronly heart went *thump, thump*, against her stays. Was the mother's idle, impossible wish she had formed about to be realized? It was an old dream, and had been more than once laid aside, then taken up again, like all other dreams, good or bad. For a while she had timidly dared to hope that Horace Gerold, who they said was a marquis, would ask for Georgette; but that had come to nothing. Then the Prince had introduced himself into their small circle, and, with maternal quickness, she had begun hoping — very timidly and very silently, to be sure — again. But it seemed as slender a chance as the first. The Prince came, indeed, and was kindly, and there was a good deal in his ways and words that encouraged the supposition that he was courting. But it never went farther than very friendly attentions, so that Madame Pochemolle had often resolved that she had pitched her ambition too high, and that she must be content with such a son-in-law as her own draper's sphere could afford. Still, she persevered in her fond fancy, and, woman-like, had, in view of possibilities, set herself to thwart the Filoselle engagement — ultimately achieving success, though it had cost her honest husband a pang, and had made him feel uncomfortable and conscience-stricken ever since.

Now, what was to be the issue of all this?

During the prefatory interchange of courtesies Madame Pochemolle, in one glance, devoured every article of dress the Prince had on, noticing also his rosette — magic symbol, fascinating to the eye of Frenchwomen! The Prince had followed the servant-maid into the garden, where Madame Pochemolle had been sitting working under a tree, and M. Pochemolle staring at the clouds. Georgette happened to be in doors.

There was a moment's animated bustle on the part of the maid and M. Pochemolle to get another garden-chair, and then the

Prince said, with quiet earnestness, "I hope I am not intruding at this early hour, madame and monsieur, but I have a communication of importance — of great importance — to make, and I wished to be certain of finding you at home."

Madame Pochemolle bent her head, and the heart went *thump, thump*, at an accelerated pace. M. Pochemolle looked in the direction of M. Alcibiade, as though to inquire whether that gentleman were one too many.

The Prince saw and hastened to add: "I beg Monsieur Alcibiade will remain. As a member of the family he has a right to hear what I am about to say." — He coughed. — "Monsieur Pochemolle, I do not think it necessary to search for circuitous phrases to prefer a request which, perhaps you already divine. Besides, my emotion at this moment counsels me to be brief. I have the honor to ask your permission" (here he rose) "to offer my hand to your daughter."

A red blush suffused Madame Pochemolle's features. In that second the poor woman looked twenty years younger. For nothing she would have got up and kissed the Prince. As it was, her still buxom face broke into dimples and smiles, and her eyes sparkled as they had not done for many a long day.

The effect on M. Pochemolle was not so instantaneous. He sat as a man who would like to hear the thing over again; but presently, when the truth, with its flattering train of consequences, flashed upon him, the latent fire in his French nature burst out as a conflagration over eyes, ears, and countenance at once. He became purple. He let fall his straw hat, and, in trying to pick up that, let go his newspaper. There was he, Pochemolle, going to marry his daughter to a member of the highest nobility, and to become the cynosure and envy of the Syndicate of Drapers! The ground seemed to swell under his feet, and it is to be feared that M. Filoselle, that pearl of young men, was, for the nonce, relegated to a very obscure nook in the temple of memory.

With respect to M. Alcibiade, the idea that presented itself to this gentle youth's imagination, with the inexorable force of logic, was that he should henceforth be able to talk of "my brother, the Prince," and heap humiliation on the head of his best friend and schoolfellow, Jules Paquet, whose sister had married a doctor. He grinned, and for the next quarter of an hour, fixed his gaze in enrapt contemplation on the Prince's white gloves. How they fitted him, those gloves, and what small hands those "nobs" had!

It would be superfluous to describe the

rest of the interview; the inevitable vows proffered on one side, the assurances of feeling unspeakably honored, touched, and so forth, on the other. Those who have witnessed one of these scenes have seen a dozen, and those who have never beheld one, may satisfy themselves by dividing as much sunshine, smiles, pleasant awkwardness, and incoherent sentences among three people as may be managed without making all three ridiculous. The element which occasionally tempers these interviews with a little cold shade—the dowry question—was adroitly suppressed by the Prince's remarking at an early stage that it was his desire to take Mlle. Georgette without a portion; and mentioning at the same time a settlement so overpoweringly and unprecedentedly handsome, that a grand duke himself might have accepted it. Whereat, M^{me}. Pochemolle was very nearly entering into the melting mood; M. Pochemolle stammered and became purpler than ever; and M. Alcibiade, who was quite acute enough to appreciate the amelioration which was being thus introduced into his own share of the paternal heritage, giggled and formed an infinity of reflections favorable to the method in which "nobs" managed money-matters.

It was not until full twenty golden minutes had elapsed, that it occurred to either of the delighted parents to call into council her whom the negotiations most concerned. But at a point where the conversation, emotional as it was, began insensibly to flag, M^{me}. Pochemolle rose, and, with a sweet smile, said: "Monsieur le Prince, I will call Georgette. She had a letter to write to one of her friends, but it must be finished by this time."

M. Pochemolle understood that this was a hint, and rose likewise to leave the coast clear. He would have retired with one of those bows which he used to reserve for customers who had bought a thousand francs' worth of goods at a sitting, but the Prince extended both hands together, and there was a cordial, sturdy grasp. Emboldened, and feeling that he had yet his part to play in the domestic event, M. Alcibiade thereupon came forward too, with the words "my brother" already itching on his lips. But he bottled them in with an effort, as, perhaps, premature, and vented his enthusiasm by working the Prince's arm energetically up and down like a pump-handle. Then he vanished.

It was not long before Georgette came out, sheltering her dark eyes under a light parasol, and glancing with some inquisitiveness to see who the "friend" could be whom her mother had announced with such mysterious archness as desiring to see her. She was

so used to the Prince that she had not thought it could be he. Since that day, now distant, when he had offered her his homage in terms slightly ambiguous, and been indignantly rebuffed, he had behaved towards her rather as an affectionate elder brother. She had grown to feel at ease with him, and his visits were agreeable, but unexciting events to her. When, however, she caught sight of the formal dress, the face lit up by a hopeful and expectant gaze, the ray of pleasure that greeted her appearance, she saw what was impending. Any other girl would have done so, for there is an intuition in these things, and the language of the eyes is plainer to comprehend than any. She advanced, her parasol trembling a little, and a bright blush mantling on her handsome cheek; and the next minute found her confronting a proposal as tender and respectful as lover had ever made, or as maiden could ever wish to hear.

What passed within her heart at that minute, she herself, and the spirits who read the human heart, alone knew. Considering the attentions which the Prince had for so long a time bestowed on her, it could scarcely be said that she felt surprised, yet the quick heaving of her bosom, the sudden trouble of her manner, argued that she had almost ceased to expect the proposal, and that it had been a relief to her to think it might never come. For a moment hesitation painted itself on her features. A struggle followed that no eye could detect, for the pangs of it only revealed themselves by that quivering of the lips that resembles the ripple on the surface of water when there is a violent commotion very deep beneath. Then a forgotten passion seemed to rise amidst this strife, like a combatant who has been left for dead upon the battle-field and revives. She essayed to resist, she murmured some uncertain words; but it was of no use. The old passion mastered her; all the color fled from her face; and when she gave the answer—trembling all over, yet endeavoring to show gratitude through the tears in her eyes—it was a refusal.

The Prince was not prepared for this. Without more infatuation than is the unavoidable lot of those who have never found the other sex very hard of conquest,—rather the contrary—he had counted upon success—an easy success. On hearing Georgette's refusal he turned whiter than the cloud which at that moment darkened the sun as if ironically to symbolize the eclipse of his hopes.

Georgette took pity upon his distress. She liked him too well not to be moved by the look of astonished pain that had settled on his features.

"Monsieur le Prince," she said, trying to

deep in her tears and to speak calmly, "I will not conceal the truth from you. Generous and good as you are, you deserve to have a heart that would be wholly yours, and that I could not give you."

"Were my fears, then, founded?" he asked, sorrowfully. "Can it be that?"—

"You guessed many months ago that I had a secret grief," she continued, completing his thoughts, and leaning for support with her hand against a chair. "You guessed my grief, and respected it. I thank you for that very gratefully, and for all the kindness you have shown me since. I cannot tell you how gratefully I thank you. I thought I should surmount this—grief. By not thinking about it, by persuading myself that the person who had caused it was not worthy to inspire such a sentiment, I had brought myself to believe that I had done so. But it seems there are feelings which neither time, nor reason, nor contempt even, can extirpate. Perhaps—But no; I was going to say that if it had been anybody I esteemed less than you I might have acted differently to what I am doing. There are men who would ask nothing more of me than to be a good wife, and would never have questioned my heart to know whether there was an image in it besides theirs. I could have accepted such a part, which would have required only obedience, and a show of cheerfulness. But I cannot bear to deceive you. I might be your wife, but there would always be between me and you the thought of the man I once loved, whom I thought till just now I had forgotten, but whom I find I love still—for indignation, jealousy, resentment, are in these cases only other forms of love. You will forgive me," she added, looking at him with a timid, appealing smile, "for speaking so frankly."

Would he forgive her! He would have cast himself at her feet in that minute and told her that he loved her more deeply and truly than he had ever done before, and this would have been true. But if a habit of society does nothing else, it teaches a man when to pause, teaches him to know when pleading will be of no effect. Georgette's sincerity, though mild and timorous, would prove as resisting as a wall of steel, and the Prince saw it.

"Georgette," he said, in a voice which he was quite unable to control so as to stifle the quaver, "I will not say that I shall go away from here resigned to my fate, for this would be promising beyond my strength. I shall leave you with a wound which Time, I know, will not heal; but let me assure you that if my respect and admiration had been capable of increase they would have been heightened by this interview. And if

I may beg a favor in this supreme meeting, it is that you should remember, always remember, that there are circumstances in which the boundless devotion of a friend may be of help, and, should such circumstances ever arise, not to deprive me of the happiness of serving you."

Perhaps she was never so near loving him as after this simple and feeling renunciation.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

IDLE REGRETS AND BAD RESOLUTIONS.

MEN make one great mistake with regard to women: they fancy they can deceive them, which they seldom can. For all the good that dissimulation does a man, he might just as well write out his secret at full length and pin it to his breast—that is, of course, when his secret concerns a woman, and the person who wishes to discover it is another woman. Horace was laboring under the convenient impression that Angélique had detected none of his agitation at the theatre; that his tremor, the last look he had cast at Georgette's box, and his subsequent paleness, had all escaped her. Coming down the staircase of the opera, he had even had the naiveness to ask his wife why her hand shook slightly on his arm, and on her answering that it must be the cold, had accepted this reply with that undisturbed serenity which is one of the salient traits of husbandship.

The next day Horace rose pre-occupied. He had no appetite for his ten o'clock breakfast. Took up the "Moniteur" when the table was cleared away, and set himself to read it—but did not read it, and held it listlessly on his knee whilst his eye wandered away to some point on the horizon, visible out of the window across an expanse of leafless garden. And, again, he was intimately persuaded that no one observed his absent mood, that no eye followed his, that no change indeed was noticeable in his manner. And what wonder? Did he remark any change in Angélique?

Angélique was pretending to read too. Of late she had taken to reading, not because she found any greater interest in books than before, but because Horace had good-naturedly bantered her once or twice on not knowing who Bernardin de St. Pierre was, and on imagining that Jean-Jacques Rousseau was the inventor of the Post Office.* So she read as she would

* The General Post Office of Paris is situated Rue J. J. Rousseau.

have done any thing else to please him — taken poison, or put her hand in the fire. For her notions of wifely duty were simply summed up in this: passively to obey, and do all in her power to render happy the man who had married her in spite of her own timidly expressed forebodings that he would repent of his course later.

The book she held was "Paul et Virginie," and, perhaps, at any other time the touching adventures of this loving pair would have arrested her attention; but now she turned the leaves of the old book with abstractedness, casting glances, which became each time more furtive and longer in the direction of her husband. This had been going on for some time when there was a knock, and a servant entered, bearing a number of letters and some more papers on a tray.

It was one of the little pleasures of Horace's married life to ask Angélique to read his letters aloud for him. She delighted in the practice so far as it was in her tranquil nature to delight in any thing, so when the letters had been laid on the table, she put down her book and said: "Shall I read for you, Horace?"

"Yes, please, dear child," he answered, and as was his wont handed her a pencil with which she jotted down in the tiniest of handwritings the substance of the replies that were to be sent. The letters were all collected afterwards and transferred to a secretary, whose office, by the way, was no sinecure.

From all quarters of the empire came the letters which matutinally worried the elect of the Tenth Circumscription. Constituents wrote in great force, begging favors for themselves and for their sons, who were ambitious of government clerkships, or for aged and afflicted relatives needing admission to privileged lunatic asylums. The ballot system is a godsend to those electors who regard political rights as blessed instruments for the furtherance of private objects; for when the suffrages are recorded openly, one is exposed to the unpleasant risk of not being able to ask favors at all of one's representative, should he unfortunately be a man whose candidature one has opposed. Then there were letters from old barrister friends, or to speak more correctly, young barrister friends, who, having been rabid Republicans at twenty, aspired at twenty-five to be appointed deputies to the Procureur Impérial, and would feel eternally grateful if, &c.; and petitions from inventors, and applications for charitable subscriptions, and folio sheets from persons who had been aggrieved and craved the favor of an interview to relate their trouble; and heaps of invita-

tions requesting the honor of M. le Marquis's and Mdme. la Marquise's company to various festive entertainments. Finally, there was a missive dated from Hautbourg on the Loire.

"I wonder what possesses those people to write to me with such importunity," broke in Horace, whose attention had not been very well sustained up to that point, but who shifted his place impatiently when Angélique read the heading of the letter. "There's not a day passes," added he, — but I get a petition from one of those Hautbourg bourgeois. They seem to fancy I am a free agent in this matter."

"This looks like a round-robin," said Angélique, gently.

"Ay, that was inevitable. They have got to round-robins now. We shall have deputations of them next."

Angélique continued to read. The memorial was signed by influential citizens. Ballanchu, seed-merchant, Market Place; Scarpin, boot-maker, Rue de Clairefontaine; Hochepain, tax-gatherer; Duval, hotel-keeper; Toulmouche, Truchepoule, and Follavoine, farmers, and many more of the same eminence. It set forth in humble language that Hautbourg did not despair of seeing its ancient lords return with splendor to fill the home of their forefathers, but that whether the ancient lords did so or not, "we, the undersigned," ventured to submit that there was a means open by which the Marquis of Clairefontaine might confer both a great honor and a great joy upon the town. The general elections of 1857 would take place within a month or two, and it was to be presumed that M. le Marquis would stand again for the city of Paris. But there was nothing to prevent his being put up in nomination at the same time for Hautbourg, so that, should the Parisian Constituency "fail to do its duty," — which Heaven forbid! — France might not be deprived of M. le Marquis's valuable presence in the National Assembly.

Whereat Horace fell a-thinking. What if the Parisian Constituency *should* fail to do its duty? The thought of the general election had never presented itself to him in that shape before; yet his colleagues, he knew, were already busying themselves about their own constituencies, and the papers told him every day what desperate efforts the Liberal Opposition intended making to secure the return of "uncompromising" candidates. It was not likely that he would be regarded as uncompromising — he whom the Liberals accounted as a black sheep. There would even be some incongruity in saying, "Here am I, a Republican, the Marquis of Clairefontaine, who

five in a palace, exchange bows with M. Gribaud, and get on capitally with all the legislators who are keeping my country under the gag." The press would laugh in his face, and the small boys in the streets hoot him. Then, what chance had he of winning his seat by the same sleight-of-hand sort of performance as last time? Why, his majority was not two hundred votes, and at the next election, if the Opposition put forward some name less revolutionary than Albi's, more Liberal than his own—which would not be difficult—all the votes he should get would be those of his personal friends, and those of the Bonapartists—though how to accept these latter a second time without presenting himself frankly as an official candidate, and hopelessly damaging himself as a Liberal forever after, was a point which now began to appear to him in the light of a problem. Insensibly he was led into reflecting on what his position might have been had he never known M. Macrobe, but followed the career he had at first marked out for himself—that of a hard-working barrister. He might have been the rising hope of the Liberals by this time. Albi would not have dared—perhaps not have sought, to hinder his election, and, if elected once, he need have had no fears at future contests—for it is especially in electoral matters that possession is nine points of law.

The familiar acquaintance of M. Macrobe must have seemed a very insufficient compensation to him for what he had lost, since the picture he evoked drew from him something like a sigh; and his mind must have been very full of an image other than his wife's, since it did not even occur to him that, had his first projected destiny been accomplished, he should never have known Angélique!

He was plucked from his meditations by the question, submissively put, "What answer must be given to this, Horace?"

"What is your own opinion, child?" he asked, with a quick, searching look at her whom he was thus interrogating for the first time on a matter of importance.

There was anxiety in his glance. He was gauging the measure of his wife's intelligence.

"Why, dear," said she, a little troubled, and darting rather plaintive looks at the letter, "I see they are kind people, who wish you well. But"—She caught the words "Paris" and "re-election,"—"you will be re-elected at Paris, I suppose?"

"It is not sure."

"But why not?" And her blue eyes expressed grave astonishment.

"They say that I am not Liberal enough—that, because I choose the friends I

like, and wear a name that is mine, and am not churlish as a bear to those who are civil to me, and do not flatter the people, I am no true man."

Her small hands clasped themselves in a sort of silent perplexity, and a little sigh broke from her.

"I wish, Horace, I understood these political questions; but when I try, it all seems darkness. I thought you were more Liberal—as you say—than all the other deputies together, and I am sure you must be, despite all that unkind people may think. Why," added she, looking up, "at the President of the Chamber's last party M. Gribaud told me you were an incorrigible Radical. He was laughing, I know; but he must have meant part of what he said."

"Yes; but this is an affair of optics. The gray silk dress you are wearing looks pink from this side, where it faces those purple curtains, and opal-tinted from the other, where it has the sun's rays on it. M. Gribaud and the Liberals consider me from opposite points of view."

She did not appear to understand, but continued, with some concern beginning slowly to depict itself on her features,—"But if you are not elected at Paris, Horace, you will be without a seat."

"Yes, I suppose so, and my political career will be broken, unless, indeed, I hack myself out as an official candidate to M. Gribaud. But that is a trade that brings a man a little too low. I would rather take to one of my old vocations—pleading, or scribbling, or even starving, which is sometimes synonymous."

This time she understood and changed color. Besides the loss of position, there was another to which Horace had not alluded, the salary of twelve thousand five hundred francs which deputies received. Though Angélique's experience of money matters was absolute null, she vaguely knew that her husband was morbidly scrupulous that every centime of the interest derived from her dowry should be expended on herself; he himself confining his personal expenditure—the keep of his brougham, pay of his valet and secretary—within the eight or nine hundred pounds, made up of the above twelve thousand five hundred francs, of three thousand francs a year, the allowance his father gave him, and of three or four thousand francs which he continued to earn by occasional anonymous contributions to the "Gazette des Boulevards." So the first thing that struck her in connection with Horace's possible failure was the diminution of comfort that might accrue to him as a consequence. She saw him discharging his brougham or disbanding his

valet or some such catastrophe; and therefore exclaimed in distress, "Oh, but, Horace, you will answer Yes to this letter, won't you? They are good-hearted people at Hautbourg, you see—they will elect you, and not cause you the annoyance which these Parisians do. Besides"—(for one of M. Macrobe's oft-repeated injunctions was recurring to her)—"Besides, Hautbourg is your own town, after all; that of your family I mean; and it is quite right they should do something for you after all that your family has done for them."

"Well, they complain that my family are starving them now."

"Yes, but that is not your fault: you said so just now."

"And what if they and I should not be of the same political opinions?"

"But Hautbourg is in the country; there will be no politics there," she rejoined seriously. "And they will be of your opinion if you go down and talk to them; and if you promise that you will return to live with them some day, which I know you will do if you can; for, indeed, dear"—and she glanced up at him artlessly—"I don't think it can so much matter about the castle having been built by negroes."

Horace gave a puzzled stare, then laughed, and, stooping, kissed her. But aside, he moaned and recalled the poor child's past words; that day when she repeated to him so earnestly that Georgette was much cleverer than she. The fact is, all that Angélique knew of the Clairefontaine business, was what her father had told her; and he, not sanguine of ever being able to make her comprehend all the details of the secret he had learned from Horace, had put the thing into a nut-shell, by telling her that her husband's only prejudice against Clairefontaine was its having been reared by blacks—which she had believed calmly, as she would have believed any other thing, possible or impossible, that he might have told her.

"We will send the answer to Hautbourg another day," said Horace, grave again; "it deserves to be pondered over;" and he glanced through the memorial himself, and thoughtfully examined its large, straggling circle of signatures, something like a congregation of clod-hoppers dancing in a ring.

There remained two letters to be read. Both were from persons acknowledging and accepting invitations to a dinner at Macrobe House—invitations issued by Angélique, at M. Macrobe's desire, in her husband's name and in her own. These disposed of without any remark on Horace's part, Angélique sorted the letters that required answers from those that did not,

those that were to be replied to in the affirmative from those that were to be negatived, and so on, all for the convenience of the secretary. The sun played upon her pure features, and cast a halo over her golden hair, as she noiselessly did this, and Horace, had he looked at her, might have been reminded of some Madonna of Raphael engaged in domestic work, but he had taken up his "Moniteur" again, and was trying to decipher a leader on some treaty question in which the words "balance of power," and "M. Walowski," "supremacy of France," and "Napoleon III." were blurred by, and mixed up, with the names of "M. Macrobe" and "Hautbourg," "Tenth Circumscription," and "Georgette," so as to render the whole not very intelligible. Angélique, having arranged her letters, glided back to her book, and beginning the same chapter over and over twenty times, never succeeded in dissociating Paul from the Italian Opera, and Virginie from a private box, when she saw a rival in a box opposite and her husband beside her fascinated and troubled by the sight of that rival.

The silence was hardly interrupted until the discreet clatter of silver and china which heralds the luncheon has made itself heard in the adjoining breakfast-room. Horace was not a luncheon-man, holding by the old French system of late breakfast and clear day till dinner-time; but lunch was a transmarine institution which served to bring all the members of the Macrobe household together for the first time every day, and led to varied conversation on the morning's events and plans for the afternoon and evening. Accordingly, when the major-domo announced "Madame la Marquise est servie," Horace prepared to go through the ceremony of shaking hands with his father-in-law, making his bow to his aunt, and being greeted affectionately by his cousin the Crimean hero, who was always demonstratively charmed to see him.

"Bonjour, belle cousine," exclaimed this distinguished officer, advancing with an enormous bouquet as Angélique entered with her husband. The nosegay was of white and dark violets, redolent with the perfume of budding spring.

"You have been to the flower-market, cousin," she said, thanking him, and inhaling the fragrant breath of the flowers.

"No, belle cousine, a country ride. A spurt straight away into the meadows, as if I were charging Cossacks; and, by the way, Marquis, I met a friend of ours as I was returning. It was on the Meudon road. A tremendously swell trap was cavalcading in the dust like the Pope's

mule-coach on a gala-day, so I reined up, ready to salute if it should be king, emperor, or field-marshal. But it was the Prince of Arcole, draped in a swallow-tail, like a Roman in his toga, and looking whiter than the lawn cravat he was sporting. If his servants hadn't been so spruce and shiny, I'd have wagered he'd been to a funeral. But I daresay it was worse: he may have been to a christening."

"Meudon," said the financier, sitting down to table. "Perhaps the Prince was simply on his way from a call to the Pochemolles, Captain."

"A morning call in black and white, sir, with a powdered periwig on the box, and two pairs of pink silk calves holding on behind! That would be prince and magnate with a vengeance. Yet, I don't know" — (He unfolded his napkin.) "We saw monsieur in the same box as the Torche—Toche—what is it?—Porche—molles last night. Maybe he had been offering his coronet to that handsome girl with the red lips, whom the marchioness admired. If so, it looked for all the world as if she had said to him what my colonel did to me last time I asked for more furlough.—Ma cousine, I have a *mayonnaise* of lobster before me, will you allow me to send you some?"

The captain's light words struck two at least out of the four persons seated round the table much deeper than he fancied. Angélique found the getting through her *mayonnaise* a rather difficult operation; and Horace, who had not been able to restrain an abrupt raising of the head at the mention of the Prince's name, hurried over his glass of hock and biscuit, and withdrew much earlier than was his custom, to go down to the House. On alighting, however, before the Palace of the Assembly, he did not go in, but dismissed his coachman, and when the brougham was out of sight, walked up and down on the pavement for a few minutes in evident doubt. He was flustered and uncertain. He knew that the Prince must have been proposing to Georgette; but what answer had she given him? Could it be true that she had refused him, and if so why? He was surprised at the vehemence with which his heart beat at the thought that Georgette was possibly still free. He turned the thought over and over in his mind, and the more he did so, the more pleasure it gave him. At last he said: "If I could only know for certain"—and as this perplexing reflection occurred his eye lit upon a cab that was plying desultorily for hire along the quay. He hailed it and jumped in. Once seated, he appeared to hesitate, and pressed his hand to his eyes; but on the driver asking him

for the second time, "Where to, sir?" he answered rapidly,—"To Meudon."

CHAPTER XXIX.

M. MACROBE'S ASPIRATIONS.

A FEW hours after Horace had started for Meudon, M. Macrobe might have been found in his study. The time of evening six o'clock, the curtains drawn, a warm fire shedding its glow on the hearth, and the low moaning of the February wind audible outside through the closely-barred windows. M. Macrobe, just returned from his office, sat poring over his desk and making what seemed to be abstruse calculations in pencil on a sheet of paper. Open before him lay a ponderous folio ledger, extracted from a strong cupboard with an iron door, and locks enough to defy all the burglars in Christendom. This ledger was marked on its chamois-leather back, "*SOCIÉTÉ DU CRÉDIT PARISIEN*."

Everybody in Paris, and in Europe, too, for that matter, talked about this "*Crédit Parisien*," and appeared knowing about it. Its shares were quoted at London and New York, Frankfort and Rotterdam; it was extolled in the money articles of the leading journals in these respectable cities; and in Paris—"sceptical" Paris—the confidence accorded to it was so entire that any person hinting his dissent would have been eyed askance, and found himself in a hopeless minority, and been held up to contumely. But the best of it was, that when you came to inquire into the titles of the *Crédit Parisien* to be regarded with esteem and proclaimed the pride and pinnacle of financial enterprises, nobody could enlighten you. Jules had bought his shares because advised to do so by Alphonse; Alphonse had speculated in deference to the loudly-expressed opinion of Antoine; and Antoine had expressed himself loudly because a certain Auguste, who knew a certain Achilles, had gathered from the latter the unshakable impression of a certain Ulysse, himself a director in the concern, that the *Crédit Parisien* was the safest investment going. So that, reduced to its simplest terms, the fact amounted to this—that the *Crédit Parisien* grew and flourished, and absorbed the economies of high and low, of senator and concierge, of washerwoman and ballet-girl, and blazed at the top of the share-list, and occupied with majesty the place of honor in money articles, because it enjoyed the unlimited confidence of its own promoters.

It seems that there are, or have been, a considerable number of credit institutions based upon the same sort of solid foundation as this; and under the circumstances, the only wonder is, not that a desultory joint-stock promoter should now and then be signalled landing at a foreign port with the funds of some eight or nine hundred share-holders in his carpet-bag, but that the whole universe should not blossom over with migratory promoters like a fruitful tree with caterpillars. In short, it is a marvel that humanity itself should not be divided uniquely into two categories—the one jovial and replete, having fattened itself with promoting, the other reduced to a condition of hunger, collapse, and manual labor, by a wilful, incomprehensible, and utterly guileless course of shareholding.

On the earth's surface there was, probably, but one man who really understood the *Crédit Parisien*, held all the cues of the enterprise in his hands, and knew to what extent the public were dancing on a volcano in trusting to it, and this was the much-respected chairman and chief promoter, M. Macrobe. Of course his co-promoters, the directors, were supposed to understand and hold cues, and all the rest of it, but they didn't—which is not a rare occurrence with those who are supposed to know things. M. Macrobe had originated the idea of the *Crédit Parisien* at a fortunate moment. On the morrow of the *coup-d'état* of 1851 there was a large and most interesting class of persons, who, having previously never possessed a centime, found themselves suddenly raised to posts of honor and emolument. These persons, whom a factious opposition styled adventurers, but whom history, more impartial, designates simply as Bonapartists, with more loyalty than small coin, were, not unnaturally, desirous to place their private means as soon as possible on a level with their public position. M. Macrobe had stepped in and suggested the way. Being known to most of the new dignitaries intimately—having, indeed, trodden the shady paths of Bohemianism with some of them—he was able to point out in the confidential language of friendship, how superfluous a thing is capital when one holds such an excellent substitute as place, and the special information it gives access to. What else he added—what alluring prospects he flashed before yearning eyesights—are secrets locked in the bosom of mystery; but the upshot was, that one morning the *Crédit Parisien* rose like a star in the east, and that forthwith it fared well with it. For the Company bought land in Paris, and lo! by a strange coincidence, a new boulevard would soon after be constructed thereon and quintuple the value of the land:

it bought ships, and behold! the new line of packets was scarcely inaugurated, before it obtained Government contracts for carrying mails, transport of troops, laying down of submarine cables: it purchased houses, and straightway the Government found it necessary to expropriate these houses as sites for barracks, churches, theatres, for sums double or treble what they had cost. Perhaps it may be remarked that this mode of making money has a suspicious look of kinship with the time-honored expedient of winning a game by means of loaded dice. But to such unsophisticated objections it will be enough to reply that hazard is often a strange thing; that men high in office are always maligned; and that if it certainly did happen that a few eminent functionaries, suspected of occult connection with the *Crédit Parisien*, became unaccountably prosperous in a surprisingly short space of time, there is nothing in this circumstance which may not have been purely fortuitous, or a simple freak of chance.

Anyhow, hazard or no hazard, M. Macrobe, as he dotted down his calculations, and threw occasional glances at his ledger, looked well pleased enough with the business in which he was embarked. The shares were at 1,550 francs; the evening paper showed a new rise of 5 francs that very day.

"There is no reason why this should ever stop," muttered he half aloud, "except that nothing here below is perpetual. So long as the Government holds its own, and keeps the Budget from being overhauled by a set of factious Radicals, we shall do. Our sources of information are inexhaustible for the moment."

He turned over the leaves of the ledger and came to a series of pages entitled "Names, Professions, &c., of Original Shareholders." It was singular the array of Duvals and Leroy, Joneses and Browns, Müllers and Bauers, who were inscribed as holding the greatest number of shares, and more singular still were the vague addresses of these Duvals and Müllers, Joneses and Leroy. But doubtless there was a key to this in the asterisks prefixed to most of these apocryphal-looking names, and in a small volume with a lock to it which the financier drew from a secret drawer, and began to con musingly, comparing it with the larger book.

"Some of them," he murmured, "have sold out and bought in again several times, making good hauls by each transaction, which is not difficult when one can foresee the rises and falls on 'Change a day or two before the rest of the public. Others have kept firm hold of their shares, and will probably sell out when we reach two thousand, which, considering they had their

shares for nothing, will also be no bad investment. What a list of names they are, and what a pretty sensation it would cause if these columns were published some morning in the papers! Um! it's my life-preserver, this book. If ever things turned out badly, I should only have to threaten with it—the Second Empire could better stand a revolution than the printing of such pages. But things won't turn out badly in my time. No"—he closed the small book—"when the smash comes, if come it do, I must be clear out of the concern. I don't see why the affair ever *should* smash, but these giant enterprises, that run such a whirlwind pace to begin with, always do. Nature seems jealous of greatness; great empires, great men, great companies, all break up before the time. I must hie me away to some secure position whilst the *Crédit Parisien* is still in its heyday, and there will be nothing suspicious in my retirement. I must get into power. Why shouldn't I? This is a reign under which a man of brains can hope for any thing."

He laid down his pencil, threw himself back in his chair, and rested his chin in his hand.

"There are so many ways of getting into the Ministry or the Senate nowadays, and such curious fish slip in there! But my plan was as good as any. With Horace Gerold in possession of Clairefontaine, we could both of us make our own terms with Government. The Clairefontaine influence would be enough to insure our both being returned for the department, and then he, as a Duke of Hautbourg, might blossom out into an ambassador, by and by into a minister for foreign affairs—dukes are the very men for those posts when Government can prevail on 'em to accept them. As for me, I should not be long in the House as an independent member, before Gribaud came over to me and offered me my own conditions. Gribaud doesn't like me—in fact, he doesn't like anybody who has a longer head than his own; but he recognizes merit when he sees it, and if I struck for a seat in the cabinet, minister of finance, trade, public works, or something in that line, or for a barony and a senatorship, he's not the man to say me nay. But if he did, it wouldn't matter. Gerold and I could put ourselves at the head of a dynastic-opposition party, accepting the Emperor, but attacking the ministry; it might rally forty or fifty adherents after the next elections, and lead Gribaud the very deuce of a life. I should get what I wanted then, in spite of Gribaud, perhaps by overturning him—who knows? Ministers are never thoroughly popular either with their masters or their followers. And all this might come

to pass within a few months of this, if Gerold had a little nerve in him! He's not much of a fellow, and it's uphill work leading him to where his own interest lies. Let us re-read what Louchard says."

M. Macrobe selected a letter from a portfolio in his pocket. The envelope was franked, not stamped, which indicated its administrative origin. It ran this wise:—

"PRÉFECTURE DE POLICE, Feb., 1857.

"MONSIEUR,—One of my men has just returned from Hautbourg, where, under the guise of a commercial traveller, he has been sounding the opinions of the principal townfolk with regard to M. le Marquis de Clairefontaine, your son-in-law, and pursuing your instructions as conveyed to me verbally last time I had the honor of an interview with you. He has suggested that the townspeople should separately and one after the other appeal to M. le Marquis, and collectively offer him the candidature at the elections, which has been, or is being, done. My agent reports, however, that public feeling in Hautbourg is the reverse of favorable to M. le Marquis and his family, and that his candidature would have little chance of succeeding if the Government were to oppose it. Supposing M. le Marquis were installed at Clairefontaine the case would be different; it seems the town and all the country around have been accustomed to take their cue from the Castle, and would be quite disposed to continue that course. I enclose, by your desire, the bill of expenses incurred by my agent, and await, with respect, your further orders. But I would beg again, as a favor, that you would not let anybody into the secret that I have placed myself at your services for these negotiations, the Government objecting most strongly to the interference of the police in private concerns.

"I have the honor to remain, sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"MOISE LOUCHARD."

"I am sure I don't know what further orders to give," resumed M. Macrobe. "Short of bringing the whole borough of Hautbourg down by special trains to memorialize him, we have tried almost every thing without effect. Angélique has no influence over him. He is fond of the child, I know, but treats her like a wax doll. By the by—ahem!" (M. Macrobe frowned)—"I must have that jolter-headed captain sent back to his regiment. He is getting on too fast with his 'Ma belle cousines' and his nosebags; I don't understand these modern husbands; they allow their wives to be made love to under their very noses. No; Angélique has no influence

over him, nor have I beyond a certain point. He feels as we do; he would like to go to Clairefontaine, but daren't because of his father. What a man that father of his! To have an estate of that value, and to pour the revenue every quarter-day into the poor-box. There is some sublime lunacy amongst those old Republicans! Then he seems to be tough, too, the old fellow; his health is all right. Um! how it would solve matters if he were to retire opportunely to a better world!"—

The jasper-faced clock on M. Macrobe's mantle-shelf tinkled the half-hour after six, prelude to the note of the dinner-gong, which sounded at seven. The financier restored his papers to their drawers and his ledger to its cupboard, locking and double-locking the latter with a key no bigger than his little finger, pygmy driver to such Brobdingnagian bolts. Then he went and leaned against the chimney-piece, and repeated thoughtfully: "How it would solve matters!"

It may be said that the words were yet on his lips when the house-door bell was rung with violence, startling the echoes of the silent vestibule and corridors. It was one of those unusual peals that bring a presentiment of something unforeseen. M. Macrobe started, and listened, motionless. A servant quickly crossed the hall, the door was opened, and, after a moment, footsteps were heard going in the direction of the reception-rooms. Then the servant appeared, and said: "Monsieur Emile Gerold is in the drawing-room, sir, and would be glad to see you for a minute, if you are disengaged."

Monsieur Macrobe, with his pulse at ninety, went to the drawing-room.

Emile had never thawed much in his reserve towards his brother's father-in-law. Their mutual relations were ceremonious. But this time there was nothing but unaffected grief and impulsiveness in the young man's manner as he advanced and said: "Do you know where my brother is, M. Macrobe? I have news which should be communicated to him at once."

Angélique, who was present, and looking with alarm at Emile's discomposed features, answered: "But Horace must be at the House. He left to go there at two."

"No: I have been to the House," replied Emile. "They told me he has not gone there this afternoon;—at least, he went, but left immediately in a cab, and a link-man heard him tell the coachman to drive to Meudon. I thought he might have been back."

Absorbed and bewildered as he was, Emile was struck by the sudden pallor that overspread Angélique's face at the mention

of Meudon, and by the way in which she pressed a hand to her side, as if to stop a sharp spasm.

"I hope there is nothing wrong?" began M. Macrobe with concern. "Horace will certainly be back for dinner. No bad news I trust?"

"Our father has been taken ill," said Emile in a voice that he endeavored to keep steady. "I trust the illness is not serious, but I have been apprised of it by telegraph, and must start for Brussels this very evening. There is a train at eight. I came to fetch Horace so that we might go together."

"He will undoubtedly go, and I will have some of his things packed for him," said Angélique, rising, with a look of sympathy surmounting the evidences of the shock she herself had just received. "But," added she, with unwilling bitterness, "if Horace is at Meudon, perhaps a messenger had better be sent for him: else it is not sure he will be back so soon."

"I am unfeignedly grieved to hear that your excellent father should be unwell," exclaimed M. Macrobe, dolorously, though inwardly that worthy man seemed to be reflecting how inscrutably providential are the ways of Fate.

"I don't think it is possible to send to Meudon and to return in time for eight," ejaculated Emile, glancing regretfully at his watch. "I must leave a note, and"—

"There is a noise of carriage-wheels," interrupted Angélique, listening, and going to the window. "This is, no doubt, Horace."

Emile sprang out and met his brother as he was descending from his cab. Horace wore the look of a man who has just passed through keen emotions, and is not prepared for more immediate trials, but, seeing Emile's face, he paused on the doorstep, and faltered: "You have bad news, Emile?"

Emile took his arm, and handed him the despatch.

"This is a visitation," exclaimed Horace, hoarsely.

CHAPTER XXX.

ONE GOOD MAN LESS.

THE Brussels of the Second Empire — a sentinel city perpetually on the watch: on the watch for all sorts of things; — for the whim of that Unfathomable Tenant of the Tuileries, which might bring an array of

four hundred thousand Frenchmen within sight of its Brabantine streets; for a revolution in Paris, which might drive away the Unfathomable Tenant, Heaven knew whither, and empty the Brabantine streets of the Republican refugees, who clustered thick within their attics as mice in corn-lofts; for the British regiments, which some thought would come, and some were persuaded wouldn't, if the integrity of brave Belgium were ever menaced.

And meanwhile, that is, pending these contingencies, Brussels looked like a pocket-edition of Paris. Its streets were as clean, its boulevards as trim, its cafés as jingling and full of chatter, as those of the elder sister-city, and the Brussels theatres gave French pieces, and the Brussels publishers sold pirated editions of French novels, and the Brussels learned societies extended hospitality to proscribed French *savants*; and the Brussels people wore French hats, and grinned before the print-shops where, to the great disgust of the French Ambassador, figured comical cartoons, representing the Emperor Napoleon, and practised parliamentary government, and venerated the honest man and true gentleman who was their king, and eschewed revolution—for Belgians are Frenchmen, with the froth taken off.

In a secluded street of the Faubourg Ixelles, which is to the radiant quarter of the Place Royale, what the Quartier de Mont Parnasse is to the Parisian Champs Elysées, and decent Chelsea to proud Belgravia, stood the small house where Manuel Gerold was lying.

These houses were not built on the French system—of six stories, a large door, and a porter in a lodge to take care of the door. The architects of the Faubourg Ixelles have studied in England. There structures are the three-floor lodging-houses we all know, and miles of which may be seen in all the London suburbs, where "*Lodgings to Let*" stares cheerlessly on stiff cards out of parlor windows. There is always a woman with a hot face who answers the doors of these places, and a cat who comes purring behind, rubbing her sides along the walls of the narrow passage, and a smell of dinner steaming up from some underground recess; and, when you have examined the bleak parlor and chilly bedroom—limp white curtains to the bed, and blue pattern wash-hand basin—it is always the same reply: "The sitting-room and bedroom, sir, will be fifteen shillings a week. Fire and lighting hextra."

Horace and Emile were driven up to a house of this model as day was dawning, rather after six. At the time they lived in Brussels with their father, their lodgings

had been elsewhere, so that they did not know this house.

The hot-faced woman who opened the door for them was, in this instance, a girl, down at heel, with cheeks puffy, and eyes blinking from having been started out of sleep, and compelled to huddle on her clothes in a hurry. She guessed who the young men were, and making a pretence of washing her face with her sleeve, whimpered dismally: "He was took ill, gentlemen, all of a heap like. The doctor's with him, and have not left him since. It was him as sent the despatch to Paris."

Receiving but a muttered answer, she closed the door behind them, and, in hushed silence, the whole party proceeded up a creaking staircase to the sick-room, which was on the highest story, and looked out on a gray back-yard. A night-light was flickering feebly in a saucer, and vying in sadness with the leaden hue of the morning sky. The ashes were cold in the grate. The furniture, of the commonest, barest kind, scarcely gave an inhabited look to the chamber, and the poorness of the place was discernible in such tokens as the cracked cup that had been used to pour medicine in, and the battered tray on which were the remnants of the doctor's supper. It was not a room to live in, much less one that should have been a home during illness; but when it was remembered that the occupier of this poor apartment was a man who had held the coffers of a nation in his keeping, who had discarded a colossal fortune because he thought that he could not honestly touch it, and who, though he possessed a competence that would have enabled him to live at ease, preferred pinching himself in order to have more to give away amongst needy fellow-refugees—there was something indescribably great in all this misery. The poverty-stricken room ceased, then, to be a garret—it became a sanctuary. Nevertheless, when Horace saw this desolate scene a great sob escaped him, and he threw himself weeping on his knees by his father's bedside.

Emile, less demonstrative in his grief, grasped the hand of the doctor who had been sitting near the head of the bed, and in a sorrowful whisper asked him for particulars, and for a word of hope.

The doctor was a short, gray-haired man, with round eyes and rather lugubrious ways. In a tone of condolence he said what he knew. Manuel Gerold had been struck down suddenly by paralysis—that grim foe to men of mind; which lies in ambush for them treacherously and lays them prostrate as with a mace. Ever since the attack he had been in a state of

coma. The usual remedies had been applied and he might revive; or, he might pass away unconsciously, like a man in sleep. He was a refugee, too, this doctor, and spoke of Manuel Gerold with something of the devotion of a soldier for a great, and revered chief.

"I have observed a decline in his health for the last twelvemonth," he murmured, shaking his head. "It came on slowly, but it was marked. He no longer smiled, and his gait had lost its elasticity."

Emile shivered and drew nearer to the bed. He wished to prevent his brother from hearing. But the doctor unable to divine and prone to diagnostic talk, like most of his cloth, pursued innocently.

"The symptoms of incipient paralysis were all there. It is the most insidious of diseases. I had seldom seen a man more vigorous in mind and body for his age than your father; but for this vigor to remain unimpaired to the end, there must be a complete absence of all shocks to the system. Men who undergo the natural infirmities of age will bear up better against certain chance accidents, than these exceptional and overwrought organizations will. I have known feeble old men pass unscathed through physical and moral trials that have proved fatal in cases where the constitution of the patient was seemingly stronger; whence I infer that strength of body or of the mental faculties can only be prolonged beyond their accustomed time at the expense of the nerves. Your father was highly impressionable. You are not cognizant of his having experienced any great sorrow or disappointment during this last year?"

"No," said Emile, and taking one of his father's unresisting hands in his, he gazed with hot tears in his eyes at the saddest of all wrecks; that of a loved being, of a great, good man. Oppressed breathing, as though there were some heavy weight on the chest, and flushed features, told, indeed, that this was sleep and not death in which Manuel Gerold was plunged. But what a sleep this, whence the slumberer can only awake to vacant-minded senility! Is not death a thousand times preferable?

The two sons sat watching beside their father all the morning. The doctor, who had gone through a thirty hours' vigil and was knocked up, though he refused to own it, went home, leaving directions as to what was to be done in different contingencies, and promised to return in the evening. Then the hot-faced servant girl re-appeared dressed properly, but grimy, from lighting the kitchen-fire, and asked whether the gentlemen would take any thing; and soon after came her mistress, a hot-faced, warm-

hearted Walloon lodging-house keeper, with a bowl of arrow-root which could be of no possible use to any one, but which she placed nevertheless on the table with an air of profound conviction, as if it were instantly going to set every thing to rights. And then began the trivial, worrying, shabby round of incidents of which lodging-house life is made up; incidents all audible in the sick-room. The call for yet uncleaned boots by the first-floor lodger; the lamentations of second-pair back, who wanted to shave himself, but had not got his hot water; the ring-a-ding procession of tradesmen at the front door, and their confabulations with the mistress about the last joint, which has proved to be three ounces short when weighed in the larder scales, and amidst all this, the re-entry of the hot-faced girl with a slip of paper, saying that this was the day when M. Gerold was used to pay his washing-bills, and please, was she to tell the laundress to call another time? In which manner the forenoon glided by.

But at one, the Walloon landlady, with cheeks aglow, a tray laden with omelette-au-lard, and bottle of Macon on her arms, and a proclamation of beefsteaks to follow on her lips, swept into the adjoining sitting-room, and, resolutely laying the cloth, declared that if the messieurs did not eat, there would soon be three patients in the house instead of one. So Emile and Horace had to take their respective turns of sitting down and attempting to swallow, whilst their entertainer discoursed with a well-meant kindness, which deprived them of every vestige of appetite they might have possessed, on what a good gentleman their father was.

"I never saw a gentleman that could talk so, nor look one so gently in the face," said she, warming up into emotion; "and you should have seen how his purse was open to everybody that had need, ay, and to them that hadn't. Why I've counted as many as a dozen come here of a morning with begging letters, stout, strong, good-for-nothings too, some of them, who ought to have been ashamed to take money which they hadn't earned. It was the same story with all. They were Republicans who had been exiled from France; and I'd have told Marie to republicanize them with the broomstick if he had let me. But he always had a kind word to say for them: they were hungry, or persecuted, or what not, and so he used to work all day, and the better half of the night, and deny himself and starve himself to make money for the vagabonds. Ah, saving your presence, sir, you gentlemen are simpler than us women; it's not a woman that would have allowed herself to be taken in in that way."

This was quite true, that Manuel Gerold had worked indefatigably. The heaps of books and manuscripts in the room bore enough evidence to the fact. It was a plain sitting-room, but more habitable than the bed-chamber, from the books just mentioned and from portraits on the wall, prints before the letter most of them, and representing well-known Republican figures: Lamartine, Arago, Beranger, Dupont de l'Eure. They were all signed, these portraits, with some such dedication as *souvenir d'amitié* or *homage affectueux*. Then there were a few keepsakes of a more curious kind: a framed sheet of paper with a quill pen attached to it, and underneath: "*Que mon ami Victor Hugo veuille bien certifier que cette plume lui a servi à écrire quelques pages de ses immortels 'Châtiments,'*" to which Victor Hugo had subscribed a large "*Oui*;" a crucifix given by Lamennais; an unedited ode to Liberty in Beranger's own hand; a group of terra-cotta figures of the Provisional Government of 1848 by the caricaturist Dantan, humorously but good-naturedly conceived, Manuel Gerold being shown in the act of striking the fetters off a slave, who, to reward him, was picking his pocket. This group, by the way, was lettered: "*En matière de Gouvernement, faut de l'honnêteté; pas trop n'en faut.*" The numerous book-shelves revealed the only real luxuries of the apartment — rare editions of old works, and richly-bound volumes of modern authors, the latter gifts for the most part from the authors themselves; also, what Manuel Gerold must have considered his most precious treasure, from the prominent place he gave it, a unique copy of Montesquieu's "*Espirit des Lois*" presented by the compositors of Paris after a speech delivered under the Restoration in defence of the liberty of the press. The compositors had printed this one copy of a unique quarto edition on vellum, and then broken up the type. It was more than a kingly gift, for kings never make such presents; it was a people's gift. On Manuel Gerold's desk lay the unfinished manuscript of a political essay he had been writing at the moment of his attack, with the pen lying slantwise on the blotting-book as it had fallen from his fingers, and a large blot beneath to show that when the pen had so dropped it was full.

When the landlady had at length retired, leaving Horace alone — for Horace had lunched after Emile, in order that both should not be away together from their father's bedside — he looked with dim eyes and yearning heart on all the objects in this modest room. But what moved him most was an album he found on the writing-table filled with newspaper cuttings relat-

ing to himself and Emile. There was his own maiden speech in the *Affaires Macrobe*, as reported in a Belgian paper, with a laudatory leader, and all the articles he had written in the "*Sentinelles*" and "*Gazette des Boulevards*;" but here the cuttings as regarded himself stopped. There was no account of his election, no report of any of his doings in the Chamber, no notice of his marriage; and these could not have been chance omissions, for the extracts relating to Emile's speeches at the Palais de Justice continued uninterrupted, the latest of them being but a few days old. Horace would have given a great deal at that moment could he have expunged the whole of his life during the last twelve months and brought himself back to the point denoted by the date of his last newspaper article. The silent censure implied by the exile of his name from this album during the past year cut him to the quick. "And yet," thought he, dejectedly, "what have I done? I accepted Bonapartist alliance to win a victory against a man who had goaded me to madness, but I have performed my duty in the Chamber as well as he would have done. He might have advocated liberty more rantingly than I do; he could not have pleaded for it more earnestly. Then I married, and that they seemed to think was another crime. But I imagined then, that I loved Angélique. In fact I do love her, but — but —;" and his mind strayed excitedly to a scene enacted not four and twenty hours before, when he had called at Meudon, seen Georgette, and being alone with her, had pressed her for an explanation of her coldness towards him in such terms as to bring down an explosion of impatience and anger. Georgette, beside herself, had spoken all that was in her heart, not upbraiding him indeed for his faithlessness to her — she was too proud to do that — but doing what women do, taking up a line that was no business of hers, and taunting him with uncontrolled bitterness and scorn for having married a woman whom he could never have loved, all on account of her money. Upon which, he, stung and infuriated by the unjust accusation, had retorted as a man never should retort upon a woman even when she is a hundred times in the wrong. He had made capital out of the unfortunate Filoselle, cast the jilting of that individual in her teeth, and left her speechless under the reproach that she too must have been actuated by a sordid motive, some scheming after a richer lover, in acting thus faithlessly. Altogether it had been a miserable scene of which it made him redden to think. And the more so, as he said to himself, that there was a time

when no woman or man would have deemed him capable of the baseness Georgette had imputed to him; and when he himself would have suffered his tongue to be cut out sooner than to use it in insulting a defenceless girl as he had done. He experienced that undefinable feeling of having fallen in the estimation of men generally, and of being lowered in his own; yet without being exactly able to perceive why.

Emile's voice calling to him in a low tone from the bedroom aroused him. Manuel Gerold had shifted his head on the pillow, his breathing was less heavy, and the inflammatory hue of the complexion seemed to be subsiding. Horace hastened in, and the two brothers watched anxiously the signs of returning life. The patient's movements were those of a man trying to shake off in sleep fetters weighing down the whole of one side of the body. It was only the right side that could move, the other was inert. At one time it seemed as though the attempt must be a vain one, and exhaustion paralyze what little strength remained in that once robust frame. But gradually — though this was the work of hours, not of minutes — life resumed a sluggish course; the blood slowly deserted the head and flowed to the extremities, a feeble but restoring stream, and, just as dusk darkened the small window of the room, with its drab clouds, Manuel Gerold opened his eyes.

At almost the same minute the doctor returned.

The brothers were leaning over their father in watchful suspense, to see if he would recognize them. Horace passed an arm under him, and propped him up gently with pillows.

"Father," said Emile, "do you know us?"

Manuel Gerold turned his eyes vaguely from one to the other, going through the efforts that follow the awakening from a long and painful dream. There was a hushed stillness whilst he labored to join together the broken threads of memory. At last a ray of consciousness stole over his features, and he strove to speak; but the sounds that left his lips were inarticulate, the tongue appearing to roll heavily, like a once strong bark that has lost its rudder. The endeavor was renewed, once, twice, but without success, and then a look of distress painted itself over the old Republican's face.

The doctor approached with a cheering word, and felt the patient's pulse. The examination did not last above a minute, but when the doctor turned there was a verdict in his eye. He silently withdrew into the next room to leave the sons alone with

their father. His science could be of no further help here, and he knew it.

"Father, do you feel pain?" asked Emile, trembling in every limb.

Manuel Gerold made a sign that he did not.

Horace lowered his head, and, after a struggle with himself, faltered: "Father, if I have done any thing that has displeased or grieved you; if I have — if I have acted otherwise than as you would have had me act, will you tell me that you forgive me?"

Manuel Gerold fastened on his eldest son a glance full of mournful affection; and the tear that glistened in his eye and then coursed furtively down his wan cheek showed that the forgiveness sought had been given and given over again long before it had been asked. But at this same moment the old patriot's countenance became illumined as it were with a brightness not of this earth: there was no mistaking the presage. Both sons sank on their knees.

Emile happened to be on the left side of the bed, so his father laid his sound hand — the right — on his head in a mute, parting blessing. Simultaneously he strove to do the like with Horace, but his left hand refused its office. There was something plaintive in the look of embarrassment and sorrow that flitted over the dying man's brow as he recognized his inability to do what he desired. He summoned up all his remnant of strength in a last effort: but it was to no purpose. The attempt only exhausted what little strength yet remained in him. His head dropped softly back into his pillow, and he passed away.

So Horace rose from his knees without feeling his father's dying hand pressed with a benediction upon him as Emile had done.

CHAPTER XXXI.

REQUIESCAT.

WHEN all was over, when the body had been laid out, and the landlady, subdued and crying, had placed upon the table the usual sad ornaments of Catholic death-rooms — the two lighted tapers, the crucifix, the cup of holy water with sprig of blessed box-wood; — when the priest had arrived who was to watch all night by the body and pray for its departed soul, Horace sat down at his father's desk to write a line to Angélique, apprising her of his bereavement. He had promised her to write,

whatever happened, and it was more in redemption of this promise than out of any natural impulse that he took up his pen. This was the first time that he had ever written to Angélique, and the words "your affectionate husband" looked strange to him on the paper. Angélique his wife, and the daughter-in-law of him who had just gone to rest? He could only dimly realize this two-fold relationship. The truth is, a woman is only half a wife who is not recognized by her husband's family, for the union between man and wife can never be complete if they do not love the same people, if a death that bows down one of the two with grief leaves the other indifferent. The terms of Horace's letter, which would have been tender and confiding had he been addressing one sure to feel as he felt, were necessarily cold and brief. As he wrote, his pen was clogged by the thought: "What can she care about this death, she who never saw my father, and had no reason for liking him?"

The next day there were those customary steps to be taken which relieve the mind of some part of its load of grief by occupying it. The declaration of the decease had to be made at the Mairie, the orders for the funeral to be given, the funeral letters be issued to friends, and, also, there was the will to be read; for, abroad, this formality does not follow the burial, but precedes it.

It was a very short and simple will, which a Brussels notary brought and read out before the two sons, the doctor, and a clerk, who came as witness. The date was of about six months back:—

"I, MANUEL GEROLD, called by some Duke of Hautbourg and Clairefontaine, being of sound mind, declare that this is my last will and testament; and I hereby cancel all wills made by me prior to this date.

"I request that my body may be buried in the foreign land where I may die, and this without pomp of any kind. Let my hearse be such as is used for the poor, and let no monument be set over my grave, but only a plain stone with my name.

"Should France become a free land again during the lifetime of my sons, they will be fulfilling my very dear wish if they disinter my remains and transport them to the cemetery of Père-la-Chaise in Paris, beside those of my beloved wife; but so long as my country is ruled by its present Government I desire to rest, as I have lived, in exile.

"I bequeath all my books, papers, portraits, and personal property generally to my two sons, Horace and Emile, to be divided between them as they mutually shall

determine; and I desire that the income derived from the sale of my literary works shall, so long as the copyright of those works remains by law the property of my heirs, that is, for the term of twenty-five years after my decease, be divided annually into three equal parts: one part for my son Horace, another for my son Emile, and the third to be devoted to some liberal and charitable object: that is, either to the relief of men who have suffered for their political convictions, or to the assistance of enslaved nations who shall take up arms for their emancipation. And I appoint, as trustees of this fund, my son Emile and my friend Nestor Roche, to whom I bequeath as a token of my esteem and affection the copy of Montesquieu's "*Esprit des Lois*" given me by the compositors of Paris.

"At my death my son Horace will inherit the title of Duke of Hautbourg. I desire that he will consult only his own choice as to adopting this title, or suffering it to remain in abeyance, for in these matters the convictions of one man cannot and should not influence those of another. Let my son only remember that when a man assumes a great historical name he enters into a tacit covenant with his ancestors to keep it pure from all stain.

"I beg that my friend Nestor Roche and Maître Devinck, notary at Brussels, will act as executors to this will; and I sign in the humble faith of God, and the belief in an immortal life,

"MANUEL GEROLD.

"10th September, 1856."

Horace listened in silence to the reading of this will, which Maître Devinck scanned with monotonous solemnity, as if he were perusing a *capias*. He could not be insensible to the passages which revealed how much his father's confidence in him had been shaken, and his mortification was increased, if possible, by the embarrassment of Emile, whom the substitution of Nestor Roche's name for Horace's as co-trustee of the charitable bequest truly surprised and grieved. This will could only have been written in an hour of dejection, perhaps of physical suffering. In his usual mood of health and kindness, Manuel Gerold would never have put this slight upon his son, nor offered him such a serious rebuke as that implied in the paragraph relative to the title. So reasoned Emile, but his tongue was tied, for before he could venture on any consolation Horace forestalled him, and said resignedly: "Our father judged me like the rest. Don't let us ever talk about this, Emile. I bear no rancor, for I loved my father with all my heart; but

some of the men in this Republican party poisoned his mind against me. It was just like them. You saw he died without giving me his blessing" —

The funeral had been fixed at a week's interval from the decease — this by request of a large body of refugees, who said that numbers of Manuel Gerold's political friends would come from London, Geneva, and from France itself to give him a parting token of respect. Horace was not much disposed at first to listen to these men, who arrived by scores every day to leave their cards, asked to be allowed to view the body, and did not kneel before it, being mostly "free-thinkers," and who treated him — Horace — with a cold and studied civility of which it was impossible not to divine the meaning. He remarked to Emile, that as their father had desired to be buried without pomp, there would be some transgression of his wishes in suffering the funeral to be made the pretext of a great Republican demonstration. But Emile interpreted the absence of pomp to mean merely simplicity in the arrangements; no plumes, emblazoned catafalque, or mourning coaches, nothing but the plain hearse which the will mentioned. Horace asked if there would not be something like the pride that apes humility in the contrast of a pauper's hearse with the position which Manuel Gerold once held, and with the immense concourse of mourners who would follow him to his grave. He submitted that if the burial had been strictly private, a poor man's hearse might have been suitable; but that if a great public procession were to be organized, it would look less ostentatious to have the funeral conducted in the usual middle-way class, not pompously but becomingly. Emile, however, was too sincerely a Republican to indorse these sentiments. He could not see that there was any vanity in using a pauper's hearse when one was not a pauper. Every party has its foibles, and Republicans dearly love a little Spartanism. Accordingly Horace gave in, and the hearse that drove up to the door of the lodging-house on the appointed morning to convey the great tribune to his last home was a common one of black wood, open to the four winds, devoid of trappings, and drawn by a single horse.

The evening before, the brothers had received the visit of a Brussels commissary of police, who came with the scared countenance which Belgian officials always wore when their country was being made the scene of any episode likely to displease the great Emperor of the French, to say that the projected demonstration seemed much more important than had been contemplated — whereupon he mopped his brow with a

red cotton handkerchief. "Refugees were arriving by all the trains, and from everywhere; an enormous number of French Liberals had also come by the last expresses from Paris, and the French Government, as usual, had sent a good many spies to accompany these Liberals, and to attend at the funeral, to hear what they might say. It was too late to ask the Messieurs Gerold to alter any of the arrangements, but the commissary hoped that they would kindly exert their influence to have as few speeches as possible pronounced over the grave, and, above all, to have those speeches moderate; it was the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs who requested this as a very great favor."

Horace would have promised readily enough, if Emile had not interrupted him by inquiring somewhat excitedly of the commissary if Belgium were not a free land.

"Alas, yes!" answered that official; "a free land, bounded on all sides by the French ambassador."

Which meek reply disarmed Emile, though, said he, they could promise nothing, for it was not their part to dictate to their father's friends what they should or should not say.

At which the commissary bowed; but added, dolefully, that he hoped the Messieurs Gerold would not view it as a mark of disrespect to their father if the Belgian Government took precautions against order being disturbed on the morrow. And these precautions consisted in six policemen, who came to the door at the same time as the hearse, with black thread gloves on, and appeared extremely anxious not to offend anybody or to stand in anybody's way.

The commissary's evaluations as to the number of people who would swell Manuel Gerold's funeral train were not exaggerated; only, the concourse, from its very vastness, was, contrary to his timorous expectations, an orderly one. At ten o'clock, a score of the leading French Republicans — great names, all of them — who had been deputed to act as pall-bearers, entered the house between two dense but silent rows of spectators, bordering the street outside, and claimed the honor of carrying the coffin themselves to the hearse. It was a plain deal coffin, painted black, but it was not unadorned, for the wives and daughters of the refugees in Brussels had sent that morning a velvet pall with a cross embroidered by their own hands, and a beautiful wreath of white camellias. As the coffin issued through the door every head in the street was bared; and when Horace and Emile took up their positions behind the hearse, they noticed that in every hand was a

crown of yellow *immortelles*, to be laid by and by on the grave.

The hearse began slowly to move; but it was not one thoroughfare alone that was lined with spectators. As street after street unwound itself before the gaze, rows upon rows of people appeared, standing in black, with heads uncovered, and these wreaths of amaranths in their hands. There were not a few women in the crowd, who were crying; and here and there a Belgian soldier, who respectfully made the military salute. As the hearse passed, the throngs of mourners in perfect order and with a mechanical sort of discipline left the pavement, and formed themselves in rows ten abreast in the rear of the procession. This was done at every step, at every foot of ground along the road, so that the cortège, gathering in depth and strength as it advanced, like a river swollen by tributary torrents, numbered thousands by the time the church was reached. All the shopkeepers on the line of the procession had put up their shutters, and every house, without exception, had its blinds drawn. Emile's tears rained fast, warm tears of thankfulness and pride; Horace was ghastly pale. What were the splendors and triumphs he had been courting beside this unparalleled homage offered to the memory of a man who had simply remained true to his faith?

At the church there was a halt. The building was too small to contain a tenth part of the concourse; so only the pallbearers and the first two or three hundred in the close-pressed ranks went in, the rest remaining stationary in the road with imperturbable patience. Contrary to what the brothers had any right to expect from the price of the funeral, all the clergy of the church were assembled in the chancel. This is usually a matter of money, there being more or less priests according to the sum paid by the undertaker: but there is nothing so much flatters foreign clergies as a great Republican dying religiously and being buried pursuant to the ritual of the Catholic church: wherefore the priests of St. X——, ever full of tact, as all their order are, had waived the pecuniary question in this case, and mustered together twenty strong to impart unusual solemnity to the obsequies of Manuel Gerold. Also, the choir were at their post, but strengthened, as the custom is on such occasions, by some singers of the Brussels opera, who had volunteered their services, and sung magnificently the "*Dies Iræ*:"—

"*Dies Iræ, dies illa
Solvat sæclum in favilla.*"

*Tuba mirum spargens sonum
Per sepulchra regionum,
Coget omnes ante Thronum."*

The grand verses of the old anthem pealing under the sacred vault, stirred hidden echoes in the breasts of many unbelieving there present. When this was terminated, and the absolution had been given, and the coffin was being borne out again, whilst the organist filled the church with the divine sounds of Mozart's "*Requiem*" Horace turned with his brother to follow out the pallbearers. As he did so he caught sight of a figure standing with eyes, or rather spectacles, downcast, and an air of devout unaction, amidst a group of Parisian Liberals. He knew the face, but without being instantly able to recollect where he had seen it. In another moment, however, it flashed upon him: the spectacles and the false mustache did not much alter the physiognomy. It was the honest M. Louchard: and on either side of that worthy stood the two acolytes MM. Fouineux and Tournetrique, who had assisted him in the domiciliary visit to Horace's rooms.

Once more the procession started on its course, and again it was swelled by increasing troops of mourners, until it gained the Cemetery of Laeken, outside Brussels.

The hearse passed the gates, and debouched into the long avenue of white tombs, and then, for the first time, the immense host broke up, spreading like a black sea over the whole of one side of the cemetery—everybody being anxious to secure a place near to the grave.

The hearse, with a few score followers, branched off the main highway, threaded some by-paths, and reached its last halting-place just as the crowd had settled down—a countless multitude choking up all the footways, covering the tomb-stones, standing on and clinging to monuments, and stretching in a compact, surging mass as far as the eye could see.

The coffin was lifted out, and the priest recited the final prayers, and a "*De Profundis*." Then the coffin was lowered with a grating sound of ropes, the parting "*Requiescat*" was pronounced, and the priest withdrew. At that moment, when a deep hush fell upon the whole assemblage in expectation of what was to follow, the scene was an imposing one.

Above, the sky glistening with a pale gold sunshine, and those opal tints which clothe the heavens at that neutral season when it is no longer winter, nor yet quite spring; below, this ocean of human faces, the majority of which belonged to men who had devoted their lives to an idea, who had been persecuted for that idea, but who were sustained by a profound unwavering faith

in the future; in front of them an open pit, with the coffin, and on the coffin a handful of clay.

A man stepped out of the throng on to the brink of the grave, and began to speak amidst a silence so intense, that a pebble, which rolled from under his foot, and dropped on the coffin with a hollow sound, was heard distinctly by everybody.

The orator was a man of world-wide fame. He had swayed assemblies, and his words struck upon responsive chords, awakening long and but half-suppressed murmurs of assent as he confessed the creed that bound them all there together, and uttered the praises of the honest, steadfast Republican they were met to mourn. To him succeeded a second speaker, and then a third — each of whom paid feeling tributes to the patriot, who had been the glory of his own generation, and would be looked back to as an example by those to come. And these speeches, which made the temples of Emile throb, and poured balm upon his wounds, fell like lashes upon Horace. Every word rang as a reproach in his ear. The speakers seemed to revile him, to point ironically to the contrast between him and his father. He fancied that all eyes were fixed upon him with wondering contempt, and when he tried to look up he could not; his glance was anchored by shame to the ground. Suddenly he started, and raised his eyes, flashing and astounded, upon the fourth speaker.

After the third oration there had been a pause, for it had been in some way settled that three speeches only should be delivered; but, just as that hum was commencing which precedes the disbanding of a multitude, a small wild-haired man had elbowed his way to the front, and, by a gesture of his hand, rooted everybody to the spot.

It was Albi.

As well nigh all the spectators knew of the enmity between him and Horace Gerold, astonishment and curiosity, not unmingled with apprehension, broke upon every face, and the people pressed forward closer as if they were nudging one another.

Albi paid no heed, but, in quick, dry, fevered accents, began a panegyric of Manuel Gerold more glowing, more heartfelt, more thorough, than any which had been pronounced before. But there was the exaltation of a fanatic in the burning phrases, and when the orator had emptied his heart of all the good in it the fanatic's mania for invective re-took possession of him. His voice became sardonic, like a trumpet that cracks, and undeterred by the sacredness of the spot — forgetting it, indeed, and all laws of humanity — consulting only his political passion, his spleen, his hatred, he

turned his eyes to where Horace stood and regretted aloud that Manuel Gerold had left no son — or, at least, but one son — who could follow in his footsteps.

Horace watched Albi as a leopard may eye a panther. He had submitted to a great deal. To the coldness of his father's admirers, to their ill-concealed scorn of him; to their speeches, in which — without meaning it, possibly — they had trampled all his self-respect under foot; but nobody could expect him to stand this.

At the first words of Albi's speech he had clenched his fists, and held in his breath, and now that the man was doing what he expected he would do from the first — slaving his venom over an unclosed tomb — he sprung forward, and shouted, "Silence!"

A thunderclap bursting abruptly overhead could not have produced a greater commotion.

"Silence!" repeated Horace, in a furious voice, "who are you that come to speak beside the grave of an honest man? Manuel Gerold had nothing in common with Republicans of your sort. You and your fellows belong to no party. You murdered the first Republic, you ruined the second, and if our country is fettered now it is that Frenchmen prefer despotism to the crimes and follies by which you have rendered freedom hateful. Stand aside! Patriots should shun you like a pestilence, for you and those who think like you are the enemies of the human race." And as Albi continued to stand where he was, Horace laid a hand on his chest and pushed him roughly back.

A great clamor arose, and immediately there was a dismayed rush to keep the two men apart. Numbers of acquaintances whom Horace had not noticed in the crowd, Nestor Roche, Jean Kerjou, Claude Febvre, M. Pochemolle, Mr. Drydust, the black-clad commercial traveller Filoselle, held him back, Emile aiding; and another throng, amongst whom Max Delormay was active, did the same with Albi. But Albi, glaring and mad, shook himself free, and, rushing to his antagonist, hissed: "The men who belong to no party are those who will sell themselves to any. They are the harlots of politics. Prostitute!" and he spat in Horace's face.

Horace sprung from the hands of those who were restraining him, like a lion through a thread net, and clutched Albi by the throat. The two men closed and wrestled; and, amidst the appalled cries of thousands horrified by this frightful scene, both fell and rolled headlong together into the open grave, on to the coffin at the bottom, which crashed under them.

CHAPTER XXXII.

DECLARATIONS OF WAR.

M. GRIBAUD, the Minister, was out of sorts again. Not that the Corps Législatif had voted against a Government bill, or convinced any inclination ever to do such a thing; but an individual member of that Assembly, a square-headed Alsatian count, Protestant and gaiter-wearing, had taken him privately to task in a rich German brogue about certain abuses flourishing in his department, to wit, the appointment of Catholic school-masters in purely Protestant parishes. M. Gribaud had answered that if the noble count would examine well, he would, no doubt, find in other parts of France Catholic parishes blessed with Protestant school-masters; but the noble count had shown himself sceptic on this point, adding that even if it were so he saw nothing to admire in the arrangement. M. Gribaud was not much used to these replies, the less so as the count had given him to understand, in accents more and more Rhenish, that the support he vouchsafed to the Government was quite conditional, for that he was sure to be re-elected by his Lutheran constituency whether the "administration" liked it or not — and hereupon had stalked away. Scarcely had this unsatisfactory episode been enacted than another nobleman-deputy had supervened — this time a Gascon marquis, Catholic to the roots of his red hair, and twanging his words gayly through his nose — to ask that his brother might be made a bishop. Now there was not the slightest reason in the world why this marquis's brother should be made a bishop, though there were numerous reasons against such a course. But as the marquis himself had been made a deputy for no cause whatever, it was quite natural that he should suppose the same qualifications would do for his brother; so that on being rather curtly denied what he wanted — for smooth-speaking was not M. Gribaud's forte — he had turned on his heel in a huff, mumbling meridional expletives sulkily. "This comes of having land-holding aristocrats in the Chamber," growled M. Gribaud, rolling homewards in his brougham. "It's the hobby of the court, not mine. If I had my way we should send the departments their deputies as we do their prefects and their dancing-dogs, all ready reared and trained in Paris. Manufacturers make the best deputies. All they ever ask for is to be decorated or ennobled, which costs nothing. Or, failing manufacturers, I'd have sportsmen; they let one alone and have no religion."

M. Gribaud reflected in this strain dur-

ing his dinner, and again after it. The evening was that of the day of Manuel Gerold's funeral, and happened further to be that which M. Gribaud devoted every week to the reception of his political adherents, masculine and feminine. The saloons were always crowded to suffocation on these auspicious nights. M^{de}me. Gribaud was "at home." Diamonds twinkled by the myriad, laced uniforms blazed in dense battalions, veteran functionaries trod on the distressed skirts of heated dowagers hopelessly jammed in impassable doorways, and younger functionaries, with the administrative bloom still fresh on them, breasted their way through avalanches of snowy shoulders, embellishing but obstructing the staircase. M. Gribaud, in a swallow-tail coat, with much gold to it, a red ribbon and star, and his hair brushed, stood on a hearth-rug and smiled a welcome to the company as they defiled before him. But when M. Gribaud was not in a good humor these smiles much resembled those which a man, who has a whitlow on his hand gives, when that hand is warmly squeezed.

M. Gribaud had returned about a dozen hundred bows and stretched as many of these yellow smiles just alluded to, when he became aware of the presence of M. Macrobe, who was performing a worshipful though collected obeisance to him. M. Macrobe ought by rights to have been at Brussels attending the funeral, but having heard that there was to be a great Republican demonstration, and feeling small inclination to figure in the midst of such an assemblage where he was not likely to be regarded with deep sympathy, he had sent an excuse to his son-in-law pleading a convenient indisposition. At the same time, as he much desired to see M. Gribaud on behalf of his son-in-law's interest and his own, he had come in the hope of obtaining a few minutes' talk with his Excellency, and was not disappointed.

"How do you do, M. Macrobe?" growled the Minister, holding out his knotty hand, which now that it was covered with a white kid-glove, looked every moment as if it was going to burst; and he eyed the financier with an interrogative glance which seemed to say: "I wonder what this rogue is going to tell me this evening?" But, suddenly, as if recollecting something, he added: "By the by, what is that Brussels telegram in this evening's paper?"

"I am sure I don't know," answered M. Macrobe, whose countenance wore an air of perplexity. "I have no further details than your Excellency has. The despatch is very summary and only says that there

was a disturbance at the funeral between my son-in-law and M. Albi."

"And that there was a tremendous course at the burial," grumbled the Minister, and he led the way to a table in an embrasure where lay some evening journals. Some other guests in the room seeing the Pillar of Politics and the Pillar of Finance, engaged in loving converse, withdrew discreetly out of earshot. "Yes, you see, there it is, a countless multitude, all Brussels afoot, democratic speeches and the rest of it. Manuel Gerold was a great fool; I used to know him well. He might have become a minister like me if he had liked."

"But he had the infatuation to prefer being an exile."

"And that's a form of vanity like any other, M. Macrobe. I'll wager the man thought he stood higher on his pedestal than any of us."

"There's no accounting for opinions, your Excellency. But I am glad that his eldest son shows but slight disposition to follow his example. I desired to speak to you about him this evening. Taking the newspaper account as it stands, I gather that my son-in-law has had some brutal affront put upon him and that the breach between him and the Opposition will be widened beyond mending."

"So much the better."

"As your Excellency says, so much the better. My son-in-law has become Duke of Hautbourg now, and under that new name I trust to see him begin a new and more becoming life. At the approaching elections I look to his standing for Hautbourg, and soon we may count upon seeing him return to the Castle of Clairefontaine and take his proper rank in the world. Your Excellency will not, I hope, throw any impediment in the way of the Hautbourg election?"

M. Gribaud's face assumed a cold expression, but without beating about the bush he replied:

"I am beginning to ask myself what Government is likely to gain by furthering the Clairefontaine scheme, and I fail to see our advantage in it." His voice grew business-like. "When first you broached the subject the conditions were not what they are now. Young Gerold was an adversary who was giving us trouble. It was essential to suppress him, and we should have done so, had you not proposed to win him over to our side. But he is harmless now, thanks to the way we managed that last election. The Liberals have cast him off, and if Government does not give him a lift next time, it is not difficult to see that he will be left without a seat."

"Perhaps he might not be returned for the Tenth Circumscription," said M. Macrobe, beginning to look blue. "But he would be safe of winning the seat at Hautbourg if the Government helped him."

"But why should we help him?" responded the Minister, gruffly. "He has never joined our ranks as you promised he would. All he has done is to tone down his speeches a little; but what we want are not deputies who tone down, but deputies who don't speak at all, at least against us."

"Everybody cannot turn his coat in a day, your Excellency," answered M. Macrobe, with half a sneer.

M. Gribaud was generally as thick-skinned as a rhinoceros where epigrams were concerned, but this time the barb penetrated a little too deep.

"A man cannot turn his coat too soon who has begun by wearing it wrong side out," he rejoined with a scowl. "If young Gerold will accept an official candidature on the usual terms, that is, issue an address that we shall dictate, and pledge his word to vote as he is told, we shall not oppose him. But his support must be unreserved. We certainly shall not help him to get into the House as an independent member." And M. Gribaud folded and refolded the newspaper he was holding in a deliberate way that signified: "This is my ultimatum."

"Then am I to understand that in the event of the Duke refusing these conditions, which he naturally will, the Government will contest the seat of Hautbourg?" asked M. Macrobe, gazing uneasily into his opera-hat, as if to ask counsel of it in this emergency. "I beg to remind your Excellency," he resumed, "that the death of M. Manuel Gerold has removed what I believe to be the last obstacle in the way of my son-in-law's assuming his estate and adopting the rank that belongs to him; and that as Lord of Clairefontaine the Duke of Hautbourg will be in a position amply to repay any courtesies that may be shown him at present."

"I should be sorry to speculate on any gratitude of that kind," muttered M. Gribaud dryly. "I know it was a seductive scheme that which you first unfolded, of winning over young Gerold to us, getting him to put his name and landed influence at our service, and so on, but these projects never become facts. Landed proprietors are the stubbornest cattle in existence; you can't drive but must forever be coaxing them. Why, two of them banded words with me this very afternoon."

And at the recollection of his Alsatian Count and Gascon Marquis, M. Gribaud grew agitated, and stuttered indignantly:

"Two beggarly clod-crushers whom we had put into the Chamber out of charity, simply that they might have a decent salary to add to their trumpery rents, and this pair come lording it over me, threatening me with their displeasure, and all because they know that the peasant electors vote stubbornly at each election, as they did the time before, and that to turn a landed proprietor out of the seat you have once allowed him to occupy is about as pleasant a job as trying to root up a live oak with a pocket-knife. May the deuce take them! But if these two, with their five hundred acres apiece, feel independent enough to bully in this style, what can the Government expect of the owner of such a holding as Clairefontaine?"

"All the more reason for not offending him," suggested M. Macrobe shrewdly.

"There would be reason enough for not offending him if young Gerold were already in his castle; but he isn't. Hark you, M. Macrobe," broke off the Minister, recurring to his favorite method of going bluntly to the point: if young Gerold returns to Clairefontaine he will have no need to come begging our support, for we should give it him as a matter of course, there being no use in doing otherwise; but you have your doubts about this return, and you apparently count upon the Hautbourg election to advance your aims. Well, I wish you good luck; only, you won't get any thing else from us. For the moment young Gerold has ceased to be a danger to us, and that is all I wanted. As Duke of Hautbourg and Lord of Clairefontaine he would certainly become troublesome again, so that to help him thither would be uncommonly like sowing stinging-nettles on my own path. I've given you our terms—unconditional surrender on Gerold's part, or else war."

"Then I think we shall have to accept war," said M. Macrobe with a feigned laugh on his lips, but a gleam in his ferret eyes. "Your Excellency will excuse us if, when our turn comes, we give no quarter."

M. Gribaud assumed the Olympian attitude—half wonder and half grim contempt—of Jupiter hearing himself defied by Mercury.

"Why do you say, 'we,' M. Macrobe?" he inquired. "Do you intend opening hostilities on us, too?"

"I am in the same camp as the Duke of Hautbourg, your Excellency," was M. Macrobe's curt rejoinder.

The scowl on the Minister's countenance deepened abruptly into a glare. Some of the coarse aggressiveness of the old days when he was a blustering criminal-court barrister rose to his tongue, and was only

repressed with an effort. He laid one of his huge white gloves on the financier's arm, and, first looking round to see that there was nobody at hand, said in a husky voice: "Don't you think this is enough fooling, Macrobe? Do you fancy I don't know how the *Crédit Parisien* is kept on its legs? Why, man, beware what you are doing in taking up the cudgels against us, for we could smash your company like a filbert, and you with it, so I give you warning."

But he found more than his match in M. Prosper Macrobe, who shot back his answer like a dart from a bow.

"I dare you to do your worst, M. Gribaud. You can smash the *Crédit Parisien* if those of your colleagues who are interested in its welfare will let you; but you can't smash me, nor even injure me in reputation or in fortune. And let me tell you this—that if those whom you serve were ever driven to choose between offending me or dismissing you, it is not me whom they would deem it most prudent to sacrifice. So it is for you to beware and take warning."

And with a disdainful shrug he strode away, leaving his Excellency disconcerted.

So disconcerted that left alone M. Gribaud began walking straight ahead in a purposeless sort of way through the crowded rooms, his gilt sword-sheath beating on the thick calf of his leg, his cocked hat crushed under his arm, and his hands pinching each other and cracking each other's kid teguments behind his back. Before him, as he advanced, the subservient throng parted in two rows of bowing heads right and left. But many a sub-prefect, who had come up to town to urge a claim to promotion, many a fair dame who had decked herself in her gayest robes and softest looks to wring from the great man's generosity a post of emolument for her husband, brother, or peculiar friend, forbore their suits on marking his Excellency's eyes fixed with no inviting expression on the carpet. Mechanically M. Gribaud made a series of curt bows as he proceeded, throwing them at hap-hazard to any one who chose to take them, as one flings half-pence amongst rabble. Then, presently, he stopped, having caught sight of a brother statesman making himself agreeable to a bevy of ladies on an ottoman.

A glance from his chief brought this eminent politician to M. Gribaud's side. He was a lanky celebrity with not more than half a nounce of hair on his head, and that half-ounce dyed coal-black. His mustache and tuft were of the same jet. He had false teeth, wore a double eye-glass on the bridge of his nose, and evidently considered himself handsome. Rumor affirmed that he

had been appointed minister because his aunt — But this is beside the question. He simpered to M. Gribaud, who at once whispered to him: "I say, De Verny, you have shares in the *Crédit Parisien*, have you not?"

The coal-black dyed colleague changed color a little, and exclaimed, "Yes; but how do you know?"

"Well, you see I do know; but there is nothing to be ashamed of in the matter. Only, if I were you, I'd sell out."

"Why, is there any thing wrong?" and the dyed one's visage lengthened of a sudden, visibly.

"No, not as yet. But of late these joint-stock companies have been running riot. Paris has become a gambling hell. In high quarters they don't like it; they say it gives a raffish color to the *Dynasty*." Here M. Gribaud lowered his voice and muttered some words scarcely audible. "So you see," he resumed, "if it should ever be necessary, for form's sake, to make an example, we must be certain that the company we attack hasn't any of our own men on its books. I don't say the *Crédit Parisien* is in any danger, but you would be doing wisely to cut the connection. One never knows what may happen."

And two minutes later M. de Verny might have been seen scuttling down stairs to his carriage, with what little hair remained to him standing upon end, oblivious of the bevy of ladies on the ottoman, and bent only on gaining the *Cercle Impérial* to see if perchance he might find his stock-broker there, and instruct that worthy to sell out to-morrow morning — the first thing.

Further on, M. Gribaud observed a second brother statesman, who had just been treating himself to a glass of Malmsey, which was good at the *Hôtel Gribaud*, as are most wines purchased with the money of the tax-payer. This second statesman held his head high, as if there were a set of plumes on the top of it, which was the more imposing as he could hardly have measured five foot one, boots included. Almost the same dialogue ensued as before, with this difference in the results, that at the first mention of the *Crédit Parisien* the small gray head crested with invisible plumes sunk to below the owner's shoulders, causing him to look forthwith as if he had lost a cubit from his stature. M. Gribaud re-assured him, but said: "Doesn't that long bit of land that skirts the fortifications in the *Faubourg M* — belong to the *Crédit Parisien*, and wasn't there a talk of buying it for Government magazines?"

"I believe there was," replied the second statesman, rather sheepishly.

"But the bargain isn't struck yet?"

"No, the affair was to be concluded next week. A very good affair for every one concerned."

"Well, I think it had better stand over. There's no great hurry for magazines, and I don't think the site a good one."

And five minutes afterwards the second statesman might have been seen hurrying through the hall of egress, and leaping into his brougham like the first, with brow knit and thoughts intent upon selling out there and then, if by chance a buyer could be found.

M. Gribaud continued his walk, glad within his soul at what he had just done. But he felt the need for a little rest and diverting talk, so he raised his eyes and cast about him for a likely guest, that is, one who would converse with him without asking him for any thing.

A few of the ambitious sub-prefects, accepting this look as a hint that M. Gribaud's glumness had quite melted away, smirked forward precipitately. But his Excellency rebuffed them with a hasty "Good-night — good-night," uttered in the same tone as the "Down, Dash, down," with which we regale an affectionate dog who jumps upon us with muddy paws; and so passed on till he beheld that valuable member of the *Corps Législatif*, the fig-nosed Planter, who had escorted Mrs. Planter to the entertainment, and seemed to be enjoying himself thoroughly, being profoundly asleep in a corner; and not far distant from this legislator, the Prince of Arcola, a little languid, but sociable, and conversing with a lady. There was no hesitating between these two. If he awoke the fig-nosed Planter, that deputy would infallibly ask for promotion in the *Legion of Honor*; so M. Gribaud made for the Prince of Arcola.

The Prince was chatting with Madame de Masseline — the lady who rendered important services to the cause of order, as represented by M. Louchard, and the *Préfecture de Police*. She was a brilliant dame, with winning manners, eyes like sloes, and pretty confiding ways, that convinced every man she desired to pump that her one fond wish was to nestle under his strong arm, and unfold to him the whole tale of her chequered existence. Man being the silliest of bipeds, this stratagem never failed, so that, in half-an-hour, she had generally coaxed out of her interlocutor all she cared to know, and restored him to Society squeezed morally flat as a biffin. Nevertheless, though there was not an event occurred within Paris but that she was as familiar with all its details as though she had been on the spot and taken ocular notes, yet it was part of her delightful system to feign ignorance of every thing; and she

would go into little ecstasies of wonder to hear that it had rained in the morning; clasp her charming hands in amazement at learning that So-and-So—whose wedding she had attended—had just been married; and exclaim, in her silvery tones, "Dear, dear! that's news, indeed!" on being apprised that her own husband—every one of whose steps in this life she had directed—had secured an honor or an appointment, which she herself had obtained for him. Women saw through her, called her an odious, mischievous, affected thing, and detested her. She returned the compliment, and in the prettiest way possible, without seeming to be aware of what she was doing, would pick the most virtuous woman's reputation to bits in five minutes—leaving not so much of it as would suffice for the needs of a courtesan. For all of which things men adored her, stoutly took her part when she was attacked by her own sex, and gave her credit for all the innocence, good-nature, and candor to which she chose to lay claim.

The Prince of Arcola was one of her admirers; or, rather, she was one of the thousand women to whom the Prince had, at different times, paid a languid court, without ever being able to make up his mind to love one of them. Indeed, the principal secret of the Prince's attachment for Georgette was that women in society seemed to him so similar—that is, so uniformly pretty, frivolous, insignificant, and wax-doll-like, that it was impossible to choose between them. It had required a woman who was not of his class—who contrasted totally with all the women he had ever seen—to fire the latent spark in his amative, but rather *blasé*, heart; and his rejection had been such a blow to him, that the first remark Madame de Masseline made when, obedient to her beck he had subsided into a seat beside her, was, "Mon prince, you are becoming Byronian. You wear a tired, disenchanted look, as if you were joining the horrible army of misogynists."

He smiled rather wearily, but answered gallantly,—"If ever I take to hating women it will be when you have left P. P. C. cards on us all, which will be never—at least, in my time."

Madame de Masseline being of that elastic age called thirty-five—that is, by her own computation, seven or eight years the Prince's senior—viewed this as a compliment, and replied mincingly, with much fluttering of her fan, and sparkling of her dark eyes,—"Well, that's pretty, and more like yourself. But I am sure my poor prince, you have some *peine de cœur*. Ah! what a tyrant the heart is. How it does

make one suffer. I have often thought we should be better without hearts—I know I should. For instance, *She* must have no heart—I mean that cruel creature, who is making you look so—so—interesting."

"Oh, yes, she has plenty of heart!" rejoined the Prince, naively, "but not for me."

"Then she has none for anybody else, you may depend upon it, unless she be blind, or deaf, or both. Perhaps she is." And she laughed, beating her skirts down, and moving her chair a little, so as to make more room, and said sympathizingly,—
"Draw nearer, mon pauvre prince, and tell me all about it. You and I are old friends, and can confide our sorrows to each other with Platonic affection."

Men are never quite insensible to the interest which pretty women pretend to take in their affairs. It is an old, but not the less true, saying, that the surest way to flatter them is to talk to them about themselves. Moreover, it relieves a sorrow to confide it to a commiserating listener.

So the Prince acknowledged, with tolerable frankness, that he had been wooing, and failed. He omitted, of course, all mention of names or particulars that could put his hearer upon the right clew; but this happened to be quite a superfluous precaution, for Madame de Masseline was acquainted with the whole story from first to last. The Pochemolles had been far too much dazed by the offer of the Prince's hand to their daughter to be able to hold their peace as to the fact. Even when the refusal of Georgette had plunged them abruptly from the seventh heaven to the seventh region of Hades, they had found no rest until they had asked all their kinsfolk and acquaintances to condole with them in their sore trial. And thus the story was beginning to filter its way through Paris with the proverbial rapidity of all such kind of news, and Madame de Masseline, according to her wont, had been amongst the first to be informed of it.

She ignored, however, wherefore the Prince had been refused; so, on learning it from his own lips, exclaimed, with an astonished sigh, "Dear, dear, how shocking! Loved some one else, did she?—and that some one else a married man. That is always awkward, because a man of wit has but one revenge open to him in such a case."

"And what is that?"

"Oh, you are pretending to be more innocent than I!" said she, simulating an air of bashfulness, and giving a tinkling little laugh. "Why, what was it the Duke of Richelieu said? 'When a married man crosses my path, I make love to his wife—on principle.'"

"The Duke was evidently wittier than I am," sighed the Prince; "but I might fare no better with my rival's wife than I did in the other quarter."

"Impossible to be more modest. But don't you long for revenge of some sort? You talk with distressing placidity about your rival. I should not deem that flattery if I were the lady in the case."

"I have no great love for my rival if that is what you mean," answered the Prince, and he knit his brow. "I am certain he has not behaved well. He deceived the— the lady, and he deceived me; for I asked him before proposing, whether some suspicions which I had were founded, and he swore to me they were not. But the only revenge we witless men can resort to in such a contingency is not to believe the purjurer again, and to show him that we do not."

It was at this moment that the Minister Gribaud loomed in sight, steering straight for the nook where the two were seated.

"How provoking! Here is that wretched mummy of a Grand Vizier coming to break our *tête-à-tête*," muttered Mdme. de Masseline, pouting, and the same instant, with a charming smile, — "This is an unhopèd-for pleasure, your Excellency. I was just saying to Monsieur le Prince what a delight it is to get a few minutes of your society; but it is so rarely one has that good fortune."

"Your humble servant, madame," grunted M. Gribaud. "Good-evening, mon Prince;" and he took a chair with the air of one who says, "I know this woman is humbugging me, but it does no harm."

"We were talking about the elections," resumed Mdme. de Masseline, with radiant fascination. "We were computing the majority Government would have, and M. le Prince agreed with me that the Opposition would scarcely win a seat."

"Then you take interest in politics, mon Prince?" remarked M. Gribaud, looking with interest at the nobleman. "Why don't you come forward? There would be no difficulty in getting you elected."

"What could I represent, your Excellency?" asked the Prince, laughing. "A deputy should have land, and I have none. My fortune consists of dogs, horses, and *Crédit Parisien* shares; it would hardly do to come forward as the representative of these interests."

"Oh, the land idea is a fallacy!" returned M. Gribaud, bluntly; "it is just because you have no land you would do so well. We could present you anywhere; start you as a candidate untrammelled by landed or any other interests, and consequently offering every guarantee of independence."

"Yes, that is what my husband put in his last address, and he got thirty thousand votes," observed Mdme. de Masseline. "You have no idea, M. le Prince, how good-natured the peasantry are — and believing!"

"We have a seat that would exactly do for you," pursued the Minister, as an idea appeared to strike him; and his tone curiously reminded the Prince of his horse-dealer saying, "A mare that will just carry your weight, mon Prince." "A mixed constituency, half borough, half country," continued M. Gribaud, vaunting his merchandise: "the present holder of the seat is old and used up: we have promised to put him into the Senate. Any how, he will not come forward again. The place is Hautbourg, and, as a sporting-man, the contest will amuse you. Your competitor will be young Gerold — you know the man; he calls himself Duke of Hautbourg now."

The Prince gave a slight start, and a flush rose to his face so rapidly that Mdme. de Masseline, ever observant, fastened her two sapphire eyes upon him like a pair of coruscating points of interrogation.

With a prompt determination that amazed but amused the lady, and gave pleasure to the statesman, the Prince answered, — "To tell your Excellency the truth, I had never dreamed of embracing politics; but the name of M. Gerold would almost induce me to accept your proposal. I do not think that gentleman worthy to sit in a National Assembly."

"No, he is not; and it pleases me to hear you say so," returned the Minister, with satisfaction. "He is a Radical, and makes speeches — we have tried every thing to convert him, but it was of no use."

The Prince did not think it necessary to undeceive M. Gribaud as to the motives for his stricture on Horace Gerold. The Minister was therefore left to suppose that the remark proceeded from an exuberance of Bonapartist zeal highly natural in a Prince of Arcola.

"Then we may rely on you," said he, with something like a gracious snort, "and we may order the prefect to start your candidature — enter you for the running, as they say at Chantilly?" and his hard mouth bordered on a grin.

"Of course your Excellency offers me an independent candidature?" asked the Prince seriously.

"Undoubtedly, my dear Prince," rejoined the Minister, who knew that there was not much to be apprehended from one bearing the name of Arcola, and a sportsman to boot. "You shall tell your electors what you please," and his contentment was such, that, rising to go, after a few minutes' more conversation, he said: "By the way, didn't you

my something about the *Crédit Parisien*? If you have shares in that concern let me advise you to sell out. I don't understand much about those affairs, but a shrewd financier, whose opinions I value, told me to-night that there were symptoms of a break-up. I give you the warning for what it's worth, and in confidence."

M. Gribaud guessed that a thing communicated in confidence within the hearing of Mme. de Masseline was likely to be repeated confidentially to a good many persons before the week was out.

Soon afterwards the Prince offered his arm to Mme. de Masseline, to conduct her to her carriage. On the staircase she said to him with gay malice, — "So it's the new Duke of Hautbourg who is your rival, mon Prince. Well, you can spare yourself the trouble of trying the revenge *à la Richelieu* on him, for I suspect somebody else has already done it for you."

"No, no, you mistake," answered the Prince, stopping her and looking rather shocked. "Horace Gerold's wife is the purest little thing in existence. Rather silly, I know, but nobody has ever breathed a word against her."

"Nor do I, my dear Prince," said she, drawing her cloak closer round her, with a pretty little shiver; "and, indeed, I was quite astounded when I heard it. Very much pained, too, I was, I assure you, for I love the little thing. I often go to see her, and she comes to see us. But why does she go about everywhere with a Captain of Carbineers? And why does that Captain sit behind her in her box at the opera and whisper compliments in her ear when her husband is not there? Those were questions I heard asked this very day, and I stood up for the poor child and said it wasn't true, and that I wouldn't have such things said about her."

"And you did quite right," rejoined the Prince, gravely, "for those facts you mention are the best proofs possible of her innocence. If she and the Captain were guilty they would act more cautiously, to avert suspicion."

"Well, I like to see men so chivalrous in defending us poor women," said Mme. Masseline, smiling, and holding her little hand out of the brougham window for him to shake; "but we mustn't be so confident in every thing, my dear Prince. Mind, for instance, you don't forget to sell out your shares in the *Crédit Parisien*. That old Grand Vizier's warning made me feel quite cold, for my husband has shares, too, and we must get rid of them at once."

"I can't see that at all," muttered the Prince, in perplexity, as this charming apostle of morality was whirled away. "If the

company were all right we might sell out; — in fact, I, personally, *was* thinking of doing so. But now that I learn there's a screw loose, it would be as good as palming off a spavined horse on somebody, and letting him believe it was a sound one. That old Minister and this giddy woman can't have reflected on what they were saying."

And so this guileless nobleman sought his mansion, rather upset by M. Gribaud's warning. For the interpretation he chose to put upon it was, that he must not part with his shares on any account, lest by so doing he should pass them on to some unwary man, and cause his ruin. Which for the year of grace one thousand eighteen fifty-seven was as out-of-date a piece of reasoning as well might be.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

AFFAIRS OF INTEREST AND OF HONOR.

As for M. Macrobe, he went home from the Minister's reception in as fine a temper as he had ever experienced in his life. He did not attach much importance to M. Gribaud's threats concerning himself or the *Crédit Parisien*, but he was stung and exasperated by the opposition his projects respecting Horace had encountered. The hostility of the Government was going to plunge him into dilemmas. If Horace returned from Brussels re-puritanized by the week he had spent near his father's death-bed, and if he were still averse to installing himself at Clairefontaine, the realization of all his, M. Macrobe's, day-dreams would be indefinitely adjourned. Luckily for the financier's peace of mind and night's rest, his thoughts reverted to the newspaper telegram reporting the fracas between his son-in-law and Albi, and he blessed this Radical from the bottom of his heart.

The next morning M. Macrobe entered his daughter's boudoir early, for the purpose of instructing her as to what she should say to her husband, who was expected home during the day. Angélique was dressed in the deepest mourning. Mr. Girth had been called into requisition to furnish the most elegant and appropriate black costumes he could devise; and M. Macrobe had also put his entire household into sables, the footmen gliding about with black epaulets and aiglets, and Aunt Dorothee as much covered with lawn and crape as if she were inconsolable. M. Macrobe might, perhaps, have trusted his daughter to see to these not very arduous

details herself; but his distrust of her capacities seemed to increase instead of diminish as she grew older. His was the mind that bustled and superintended every thing; and he had not forgotten, as soon as Manuel Gerold was dead, to have all the Marquis's coronets on the carriages and hall chairs of the Hôtel Macrobe replaced by ducal ones, and to direct the servants to address the new duke on his return as "Monseigneur."

Angélique was alone. The evening before she had let fall a few words in her cousin's hearing about the difficulty of getting some worsted matched; and the Crimean Hero had started off, immediately he was up, to scour Paris with a ball of the rare wool in his pocket, and the determination to find one like it at any hazard in his gallant soul. Aunt Dorothée was in the seclusion of her own chamber darning pocket-handkerchiefs, or some work of darkness. She hid and barred herself in to perpetrate these crimes, for her brother allowed her enough pin-money to keep ten families in comfort, and having once discovered a basketful of stockings she had carefully mended, had pitched them unhesitatingly into the fire, and bought her six dozen pairs of new ones—an act of wastefulness that had kept her sleepless for a week.

"My child," began the financier, throwing himself on the sofa beside his daughter, and speaking much more brusquely than was his wont, "I hope you feel the importance of inducing your husband to renounce the Quixotism that is keeping him out of his estates. That was all very well for a time, whilst your father-in-law was alive; but the comedy would turn to a farce if it were played much longer."

"I do not think Horace intends it for a comedy," observed Angélique, meekly.

"No, but it is one nevertheless; and now is the time for you, if you are a woman of sense, to insist upon your husband doing what is proper and becoming. You should direct all your energies towards this object. What were you reading there?" and he took the book she was holding out of her hands. "'Vies des Grands Hommes par Plutarque, Edition expurgée.' Fancy reading such trash as that! Who cares now about Epaminondas of Thebes, or Lycurgus of Lacedæmon? Why don't you take to Balzac, who painted our own times, and gives you a glimpse of the world we live in; or to M. Gousset's novels? He brings us one every six months, and I'm sure they're very good reading. Gousset is a witty fellow; he would enliven you, teach you what a *grande dame* should be, and how she should manage her husband."

"It was Horace who recommended me to read this book," said Angélique.

"Then do; but read the others as well. You're not a school-girl now, and your happiness is in your own hands. What I tell you is for your good. If a woman can't do what she likes with her husband, her life is a blank, and so is his. Men like being led, and they only like the women who lead them."

Angélique sighed.

"I always knew I was not the wife for Horace," she said, with sadness.

"Stuff!" answered the financier, bluntly. "But the way to secure a man's affection is not to be in perpetual adoration before him, as before a shrine. A woman must have spirit, and bring her husband to respect her. Look at that young Georgette Pochemolle, whom you took under your protection, and wanted me to abet in her husband hunt. She has spirit enough for two. She had set her cap at your husband, and would have probably married him if you hadn't, and depend upon it that counter-girl as she is, she would have twirled him round her little finger, and been staring it as mistress of Clairefontaine long before this time."

"I know she is cleverer than I am," answered Angélique, wiping some tears, which had sprung to her eyes. "She would have made him happier than I do, and I believe he sees it now."

"You are a little goose," cried M. Macrobe, with anger. "You are in hysterics because your husband looks dull in your company, and because it turns out he spent an afternoon at Meudon last week. But what rivalry have you got to fear now? You are married; your husband can't divorce you; and as for Georgette, she is too shrewd a girl to become Horace's mistress. So all the cards are in your hands, and if your husband finds your company dull, it is merely because you sit and mope, reading 'Plutarch's Lives' instead of being up and stirring and remembering that you are Duchess of Hautbourg, and clearing your husband's mind of that mawkish, cheap-newspaper philanthropy which has got there like a cobweb into a knight's helmet. Lead him, push him to Clairefontaine, girl. You will make my fortune, and his, and he will thank you all his life for it."

This was the first time Angélique had seen her father so peremptory. His counsels were more often conveyed by hints than by direct injunctions; and the hints, though broad, were always given in cheerful, sanguine terms, with a kiss to seal them at the end. But now M. Macrobe gave no kiss; his words were incisive; the expression of his face was anxious; and Angélique,

she looked at him through her tears, felt frightened.

She had not the remotest hope of bringing Horace to do any thing by her own powers of persuasion, and it was adding to her miseries to think that her father had no direct interest dependent upon her efforts. What could he mean by saying that she might make his fortune—he who was so rich already?

She was pondering over this in helpless silence, after making the faltering answer that she would do her best, when M. Macrobe was summoned away by a servant, who came to say that Monsieur Drydust and Monsieur Gousset had called to ask for news of the Duke of Hautbourg.

For news of the Duke! Why should they come for news of him?

Angélique had not seen the telegrams relative to the disturbance at Brussels, for, when Horace was not there to tell her what was in the paper, it was generally her cousin the Captain who read the chief items of interest to her, and as the Captain was this morning absent, she had been deprived of this recreation. But there was something in the word “news,” as pronounced by the footman, with an air of bewilderment, as if he only half understood what the two visitors meant, which startled her.

“What news?” she asked, forgetting, in her sudden stupor, that she had been crying, and that her eyes were red.

“The gentlemen said news from Brussels, Madame la Duchesse,” replied the servant, with hesitation. “They spoke of an accident.”

“Accident?” And Angélique rose, her face abruptly bleached of all its color.

“No, no,” ejaculated M. Macrobe, motioning to the man to withdraw. But Angélique was too deeply alarmed to be thus easily pacified, and though her father attempted to dissuade her, she followed him into the drawing-room.

Mr. Drydust and M. Gousset were both there, dressed in that complimentary mourning implied by gray gloves, and a hat-band two inches broad.

They pressed forward with looks of condolence befitting a visit to a house bereaved of an illustrious member; but M. Gousset did not open his mouth, for where Mr. Drydust was, a second spokesman was superfluous. To do the eminent Englishman justice, however, the sight of the young wife in her woeful crape dress, and with her terrified countenance, for a moment paralyzed even his eloquent tongue. But perceiving that there would, after all, be more cruelty in remaining silent than in speaking, he launched forth and described, with picturesque vividness, just as

he had done it already for the behoof of the readers of his penny paper, the scene at Brussels on the preceding day, the fineness of the weather, the speeches at the cemetery, the appearance of Albi, his insult of Horace, the tussle of the two men at the graveside (at which Angélique turned icy cold), and the final climax where both had been dragged out of the pit, bleeding, and half-stunned by the fall. Then had followed, it seems, an indescribable uproar—a tumult of shouts and excited recriminations. The great majority, who had not caught the sense of what Albi had said, looked upon Horace Gerold as the aggressor. They regarded his outbreak as a rancorous bit of spite that, considering the circumstances and the place, was ignoble and sacrilegious. He had been hissed as he left the burying-ground, and the event had thrown the whole French colony of Brussels into the wildest state of commotion. But Mr. Drydust knew no more than this, for his important duties did not allow of his absenting himself from Paris more than twenty-four hours, and he had left Brussels by the evening mail, just hearing, as he departed, that a meeting had been arranged between Horace Gerold and Albi for that night or the morrow morning.

Angélique sank on a sofa fainting, and some confusion followed with ringing of bells and racing about to fetch salts and glasses of water. Mr. Drydust, whilst experiencing an artist's pride in the effect his well-told narrative had produced, made himself useful in prescribing the way in which the salt-bottle should be held, the quantity of water that should be used to chafe the temples, and in recapitulating the symptoms of faintness he had observed after violent emotions in other people of his acquaintance. Then, when Angélique had been so far restored as to be able to say it was nothing, and that she should be well again immediately, he offered more valuable consolation by the remark that no news was good news, and that if no tidings had come it was certainly because no disaster had happened.

“You say the meeting was to take place last night or this morning?” said Angélique, trembling.

“I think last night, for it was moonlight, and they would want to get every thing over before the Belgian police had time to interfere,” answered Mr. Drydust; “but this is the more re-assuring as we must have heard by this time had there been any accident.”

“Duels between civilians, both ex-journalists, are not very serious,” put in M. Gousset, soothingly, with a smile. “I have been in many of them. We penmen bark

more than we bite," which was an observation he repented of a moment after, in recollecting the affair between Horace Gerold and the unlucky Government writer Paul de Cosaque.

M. Macrobe was more unsettled by the intelligence just brought than he cared to show; and asked in a low, quick voice, whether Mr. Drydust knew what weapons had been selected, and who were the seconds.

Mr. Drydust did not know about the weapons, but opined they must have been either foils or pistols. His Polish friend, Count Cutandslitski, had fought with a cavalry sabre, and he had been present at the duel of his other friend, El Conde y Colero, y Masticados, y Podagras, who had done battle with his grand-uncle's rapier; but such occurrences were exceptional. As for the seconds, Mr. Drydust had heard that all the Liberals, even one of Manuel Gerold's executors, Nestor Roche, had refused to act for Horace; but as Jean Kerjou was there, and had energetically taken part on Horace's side in the Cemetery riot, there was little doubt that he would be one of the seconds, and probably Emile Gerold would be the other. Mr. Drydust followed up with a story of his Bavarian friend, Baron Kortpfaster, who had been attended on the ground, in an emergency, by his undergardener and his head cook.

"At what time does the next train come in from Brussels?" inquired Angélique, resisting her father's advice that she should go and lie down a little, whilst a telegram was sent to Brussels with a request for an immediate answer, if Horace had not already left.

"I believe a special train was to leave two hours after midnight, on purpose to bring back the Parisians who had been to the funeral; and it ought to be due about this time," replied M. Gousset.

"Then let us go to the railway-station," pleaded Angélique to her father; "any thing is better than this suspense."

M. Macrobe offered no opposition, and the carriage was ordered. But it was not required for this journey, for Angélique had scarcely returned to the drawing-room from putting on her bonnet, and Mr. Drydust was still expatiating to the financier on the possibilities and probabilities connected with affairs of honor, when the unconscious cause of all this anxiety, Horace himself, entered unannounced. He had let himself in with his latch-key, and was accompanied by Emile. His right arm was in a sling. Angélique started, gave a cry of joy, and — for the first time in her life — ran forward to throw herself in his arms. He kissed her, but coldly; and the poor child thought

he looked ten years older than when she had seen him last. The men clustered round to shake his hand, and question him about his wound, which he hastened to declare was a trifle.

"And Albi?" asked M. Macrobe, impatient to satisfy his curiosity.

Horace threw down his hat, and answered in a way that made his hearers' flesh creep. "After my first duel I promised my father, I would never again take human life. But I have shattered this man's wrist; and if ever again he edits a libel about me, it will not have been penned with his own hand!"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

SUB ROSA.

THIS second duel was the one thing wanted to give the definite stamp to Horace's reputation. The Liberals were unanimous in holding that Albi had been as good as butchered by a bravo; and as Liberals, being the loudest talkers, generally end by imposing their opinions on the rest of the community, so it came to be generally admitted amongst the public, that the eldest son of Manuel Gerold was becoming a dangerous character. At the Café de Madrid opinions were unshakable on this point; so unshakable that Horace's friend Jean Kerjou exchanged warm words that were nearly begetting warm blows, in trying to din into an obtuse head that Horace had been first insulted, and that anybody else with an ounce of pluck would have acted as he had done. Of course, this convinced no one, nor could it be expected to do so, for the question as to who was right in the dispute and who wrong was quite beside the issues of the case. Albi had obtained twenty thousand opposition votes at the last election, and Manuel Gerold's son had suffered himself to be returned in the official interest — these were the true bases of the problem: and the conclusions to be drawn from them self-evident. In picking a quarrel with Albi and then maiming him, Horace Gerold had been actuated by the basest motives of personal vengeance, and all talk about provocation received was so much wantonness, a slander on the fair fame of an ill-used Liberal. By the end of a week, there was a great majority prepared to swear that Albi had never unsealed his lips by the grave-side at all; nay, that Horace had

first invited him to speak, and then clutched him by the throat as he was going to begin.

As for the government supporters on the Boulevards and in drawing-rooms, they waited before expressing an opinion to hear what the great M. Gribaud would say; but that statesman having remarked humorously to somebody: "Bah! two Radicals fight, and one wings the other; *c'est toujours une patte de moins*," the fiat went forth that there was one Radical paw the less, and that was all. Some even pretended for a day or two not to remember which it was that had damaged the other, a good joke that took very well in ministerial ante-rooms, and Horace's only champions were his fellow deputies, who from *esprit de corps* were naturally pleased that a member of their House should have bruised one of the outer world; and the women, who, following the tender bent of their sex, thought the whole incident sensational and shocking, but admired the hero of it, deeming there was something mediæval and chivalrous in his readiness to go out and smash a fellow-being's limbs for a yea or a nay.

The event, however, served to draw down public attention on Horace in more ways than one. It was known that the Member for Paris inherited a dukedom by his father's death, and it was said that he also inherited a large fortune. During Manuel Gerold's lifetime the Clairefontaine mystery, as it was called, occupied few people, for the reason that society is not prone to credit particular individuals with virtues that it does not possess itself as a body. The construction put upon Manuel Gerold's self-banishment from Clairefontaine was simply that he preferred spending the revenues of that estate abroad; and when a few people hinted that the Republican exile laid out the whole of his income in charities, society smiled at such credulity — many answering that it was a notorious fact that Manuel Gerold owned a large mansion at Brussels, that he might be seen driving there any day in a barouche and four, that they had seen him there themselves — all of which things were religiously believed, for if it takes a long time to make us swallow truth, we gulp down slander without asking questions. Now, however, that Manuel Gerold was dead, and that people could give him his due without humiliating themselves, some began to admit that he had really died in a garret, and that it was a mistake about his barouche and four. But this only made them the more anxious to inquire what his son was going to do with the ancestral property; and they kept their eyes upon

Horace, who, living amongst them, could not hide his acts under a bushel as his father did.

"It is all on account of ghosts," said Mr. Drydust, confidentially, to an admiring circle of listeners. Manuel Gerold was superstitious. I never knew a Republican who wasn't — and he believed Clairefontaine was haunted. A very curious story, footsteps heard along the passages at night; a screech-owl making himself unpleasant at sunset, and so on. The Marquis of Stronachlachar, who has a castle in the Shetlands, told me a story like it. His great-grandfather comes and bays the moon seven days out of every month under the form of a black sheep-dog. The keepers have orders to let him alone. I shouldn't wonder if the screech-owl were a Gerold who had done something or other in days gone by. All the old families have an ancestor or two in trouble." And satisfied with having caused the hair of his gentle hearers to uncurl itself with horror, Mr. Drydust went home to write an extremely clever column of ghost legendry, which was devoured in Islington, Camberwell, and Upper Peckham; though the denizens of these Drydust-worshipping localities were informed that "my friend the new Duke of Hautbourg" was above being frightened away from his domain by disagreeable peculiarities just mentioned, and would probably hoist his pennon on Clairefontaine towers before the year was out. In fact," concluded Mr. Drydust, "I may inform you positively that he will do so. It is already announced that he will stand for the Hautbourg circumscription at the next elections; and I am told that the famous upholsterers, the Messrs. Palissandre, have been sent to the Castle to refurnish it from roof to basement. Perhaps some of my letters to you next autumn will be dated thence, as I count on going there for a few days' shooting."

It would have greatly relieved M. Macrobe to be as positive about all this as the English correspondent, for the financier was beginning to see that a great deal more hinged upon his son-in-law's resolutions than ever he had intended should be the case. The Crédit Parisien had been struck a blow in the dark — a vital blow that astounded M. Macrobe by its suddenness and alarming effects — and the question was now coming to this: — that unless Horace did what was required of him, and did it quickly, so as to place himself on a vantage-ground whence peace could be made on beneficial terms with M. Gribaud, the Crédit Parisien might crash down and involve its chairman in its utter ruin. Bitterly did the latter now curse himself for

the unguarded display of temper by which he had exposed himself to the animosity of the powerful Minister of an autocratic Sovereign. But even the shrewdest of us commit blunders, and M. Macrobe in that precipitate moment, when he defied M. Gribaud, really fancied he was the stronger. He had not given himself the time to reflect that all the influential men who supported the *Crédit Parisien* were the abject menials of their despotic chief, and that just as in their own interest they had founded the *Crédit Parisien*, so in their own interest they would desert it at the first frown of the man who held their political destinies in his hands. The financier saw this now, when it was too late. The credit of the Company was not yet shaken amongst the bulk of the shareholders; there had been no public panic, but all the principal holders of scrip were quietly withdrawing their stake in the game. It was like the departure of the rats before the crew of the sinking vessel have yet perceived the leak. Then, there was the more serious symptom of the breaking off of the bargain concerning that land which was to have been sold to Government for magazine building. The land had been bought at a high price under the certainty that the tax-payer would be made to purchase it for three times the sum given; but if this arrangement were cancelled, the Company must either re-sell the land—and there was little chance of their obtaining for it the sum they had paid—or build upon it at their own risks, that is, at obvious loss, for the quarter was not a likely one for building speculations. Anyhow, therefore, the operation would bear an ugly look in the next statement to the shareholders—those statements which the chairman was wont to make from an enthusiastic platform to an audience wild with confidence and delight! Yes, there was ruin lurking under those rocks ahead, towards which the gale he had invoked was driving the financier; though by ruin must not be understood in this case pecuniary destitution, for the chairman of the *Crédit Parisien* had taken good care that whatever befell the Company he himself should always remain well provided for. But the collapse of the *Crédit Parisien* would damage him morally, wreck all the ambitious schemes that were his passion; and under the circumstances his position would perhaps be worse than if he was beggared. For when a man of restless mood has more money than he wants, cares nothing for love, has no artistic tastes, and is so far shattered in reputation as to find the road to all the honors he covets hopelessly closed to him, what has he to live for?

Horace would have pitied his father-in-law if he could have divined the sickening anxiety that was gnawing at his heart. But the financier cloaked his feelings so that there was nothing of them visible in his face. Only he was more deferential with Horace than ever; agreed emphatically in all he said, and in the matter of the duel especially gave his approval without stint, in a hearty, admiring way, which was imitated in various keys by all the members of the household circle. Horace, however, abstained from all mention of the subject that was pre-occupying so many heads, both under the Macrobe roof and without it. He threw, indeed, a ray of hope across the financier's path by announcing *proprio motu*, on his return from Brussels, that he should accept the offer of the Hautbourg citizens; but allusions to Clairefontaine seemed tacitly adjourned until the day when the agent to the estate should pay the quarter's rents into the hands of Messrs. Lecoq, Roderheim and Macrobe, and when the latter would have to ask in his banking capacity what was to be done with the money. It was Manuel Gerold who had always disposed of the funds hitherto; for, notwithstanding the deed of gift, his sons had insisted upon charging him with this trust; but for the future Horace and Emile were the masters, and the payments would be made in their name. M. Macrobe looked forward to this day of rent much as a criminal does to his trial.

Meanwhile, he one evening received a call from M. Louchard. That functionary had not been sent for, but sneaked in at nightfall with a false beard on, and giving a card with a fictitious name on it to the servant. A few pencil hieroglyphics on the back of the card, however, revealed his identity to M. Macrobe, and he was at once admitted into the financier's study.

He never looked at peace with himself, did this official, and on the present occasion he was more than usually agitated, as though he had been followed all the way from the Rue de Jerusalem by one of his own men, and expected to be apprehended by the neck. On the other hand, the troubled glance he cast at M. Macrobe, and the dishevelled appearance of his spurious black beard might have given one to suppose that he had private orders to arrest the financier and did not like the job.

"M. Macrobe," he began, removing the spectacles that encumbered his eyesight, and staring in alarm at the financier, "you have been quarrelling with M. Gribaud?"

"Yes. How do you know it, and what are your instructions with regard to me?" answered M. Macrobe calmly.

"Not many instructions about you, sir," rejoined the Director of Police, making as if he would remove his beard also, but, on second thoughts, allowing it to remain, as not easy to re-fix. "Not many instructions about you, but we are to send down five men to Hautbourg to sap your son-in-law's candidature."

"That is, to tell lies about him?"

"Well, M. Macrobe, you know how we generally work in such cases. We must say as much good as possible about the official candidate, and spread all the rumors we can about his opponent."

"What kind of rumors, for instance?"

"It all depends on the locality, on the character of the candidate, and on that of the electors," said M. Louchard piteously. "What answers in one case will not always do in the other. This time we have to whisper that your son-in-law is stingy, that he is a Radical who hoards up all his money, and will never go to live at Clairefontaine because of the expense it would entail. Also, that he doesn't pay his bills, and one of our agents is to pretend to be a small tradesman who has had a debt owing to him for years. This will disgust the men. Then, to put the women against him, we have got to report that—I beg your pardon, sir—that he drinks, and beats his young wife; that he seduced a girl in Paris, and deserted her with her child, refusing to give her a centime; and that he killed two poor men in duels, leaving their wives with children to bring up and no money to do it with. Then we should urge that if the official candidate were elected, he would buy Clairefontaine of the new duke, and hold high state there, which, being a rich man, he can afford to do."

M. Macrobe quietly went to his bureau, unlocked a pigeon-hole, and fingered some bank-notes.

"What is the pay of the five men who are to do this work?"

"Bribery is not possible here," answered M. Louchard, with a shake of the head. "Besides, it would be of no use, for the mayors of all the *communes*, the priests, the justices of the peace, the schoolmasters, will every one of them be against Monsieur le Duc. An election in the country is not the same thing as one in Paris. If I were M. le Duc I would retire. The defeat will be certain."

"Here are ten thousand francs," remarked M. Macrobe, paying no heed to what the other was saying. "If I thought they would be of no use I shouldn't give them you. The five men must be bought, and, instead of running down the Duke of Hautbourg, they must malign his adver-

sary. Now tell me about the prefect. What sort of a man is he?"

"H'm, one of the usual sort," replied M. Louchard, not resisting above a quarter of a minute to the temptation of the notes. "He has nothing but his pay, thinks a good deal of himself, and is an ass. He used to be a journalist."

"I fancy I remember the man. Used to be in the Republican press, then became one of Guizot's semi-officials; after '51 found himself a Bonapartist."

"Those men are expensive to bribe when they get to be prefects," observed M. Louchard, despondingly. "His salary is thirty thousand francs, and M. Gribaud's rule is inflexible. A prefect who lets a member of the Opposition through loses his place."

"Well, listen, Louchard," said the financier, sinking his tone and speaking quickly. "Gribaud trusts you, and you have power. I have put you in the way of a fair number of good things since we first became acquainted, but all that is nothing to what you will reap if you serve me in this. I must win this election;—do you understand, I must? Now manage in your own way. Give the prefect his price, and tell him we'll see he doesn't lose his place. Buy the sub-prefect of the *arrondissement*, and as many priests and schoolmasters as you may deem it worth while. I don't care much about the mayors, for country mayors are dolts, and obey either the vicar or the school-teacher, whichever happens to have the most intriguing head-piece. But cajole the women. Women are the hinges of the political door, it won't swing to order without their help. As to money, I give you *carte blanche*: and, if we win, your own fee, mind, is five thousand napoleons."

M. Louchard was unnerved.

"If we fail it shall not be for want of efforts," stuttered he, drawing out the pocket-handkerchief, which was the signal he hoisted in cases of mastering emotion.

"Yes, but we musn't fail. You must go to work as I've seen the Government do in past elections. There's no Opposition paper in Hautbourg, of course. You must supply the deficiency with lampoons against the other man. Circulate them widely, slyly; have them pasted everywhere in the villages, scattered broadcast in the fields—good, unscrupulous, plain-spoken lampoons, such as the peasants will understand and commit to memory. Those were capital lampoons your office circulated against that Orleanist count who contested the Charente last year."

"Ay, they were, and they almost drove the man mad," exclaimed M. Louchard, brightening at the recollection. "It's a

very clever fellow who writes them. He is one of our *jays*."

"One of your — ?"

"I beg your pardon ;"—and M. Louchard grinned slightly—" *jay* is the name we give to the writers of the Opposition press who are in our pay, and whose business it is to sow dissensions in the other camp by accusing the foremost men in the party of being backsliders. The trade requires talent. One of the *jays* shall do us these lampoons. The work will be no easier here, as the Duke's opponent is a stranger to Hautbourg, and there will be no prejudices in his favor to overcome."

"Who is he?" asked M. Macrobe, without interest, for official candidates were generally the personages of least importance in the contests to which they lent their names.

"Why, it's the Prince of Arcola. Has it not appeared in the papers yet?"

The financier dropped a packet of letters he was holding.

"The Prince of Arcola!" he echoed, pensively. "What can this mean? Why, he is one of the Duke's intimate friends."

"He may have been, M. Macrobe; but the friendship has cooled now," answered the police-director glumly. "I heard from M. Gribaud's own lips that the Prince owed a grudge to the Duke of Hautbourg and would fight him hotly; and a lady who notes for our office—I may as well give you the name: it's Mme. de Massoline—told me that the grudge is one with a woman at the bottom of it. Stay, I have it on paper"—M. Louchard drew out a dingy pocket-book and read: "*When Deputy Horace Gerold lived Rue Ste. Genevieve, seduced daughter of his landlord, draper Pochemolle. Name of girl Georgette. N. S.; 'this means that there was no scandal, that the neighbors didn't get wind of it. 'P. of A. took a fancy to Georg. I. I.:' that is, in all innocence. 'Proposed to her and was refused. Bec. mist. 1st lov.:' because she is still the mistress of her first lover. 'K. Meudon, styl. dec. 2 par. 1 bro. = resp.:' he keeps her at Meudon, in a becoming style, and she has her parents and her brother living under the same roof with her for respectability's sake.*"

M. Louchard closed his pocket-book, and restored it to its lair, without appearing to reflect that there was any thing in his communication of a nature to jar upon a father's ears. "This accounts for the Prince of Arcola's animosity," he added, sapiently. "He is a very proud nobleman, and doesn't like to be crossed."

M. Macrobe had stood staring whilst M. Louchard read his memorandum. He was inclined to credit every word of it; but the

circumstances unfolded rather astonished than shocked him, for he was too much of a Frenchman and too little of a moralist to be over-scandalized at his son-in-law's keeping a mistress. What he ruminated was how the intelligence could be made to serve his own particular ends; and this pre-occupation took shape in his next words.

"Do you know whether the Duke goes often to Meudon?"

"I do not, M. Macrobe," answered M. Louchard, "but we could easily find out."

"Yes, I wish you would. Set a man to watch when he visits there, and drop me a line. As for the election, all that I have said before holds good. Commence operations at once, and ply your money cleverly."

M. Macrobe had a second recourse to the pigeon-hole, and M. Louchard, for the second time, drew out his handkerchief.

"There's not a person in the world I would do this for but you," said he, evidently anxious to compound a little with his own conscience. "You act very generously, M. Macrobe, and the pay at the Rue de Jerusalem is not good; indeed, I should have retired ere this, but for expecting the cross of honor and a small pension at the end of my twenty years' service. I risk both those, and my liberty as well, by doing this."

"Nothing venture, nothing have, Louchard; but you will lose nothing if you bestir yourself at your best."

"I will forward you daily reports of the progress we make," said the police-director; and with a new attempt at self-compounding, he added: "After all, I shall be acting according to my own convictions in helping the Duke of Hautbourg. I am of his opinion in politics. I don't like M. Gribaud."

"You are a Liberal, then, Louchard?"

"Yes, and have been from father to son," replied the other, innocently; "and I admire M. de Hautbourg for his spirits. I was at Brussels the other day in a professional capacity, and saw the fight in the cemetery. It was like a bull-dog shaking a pole-cat. M. de Hautbourg was very near shaking me once in that way; but I have forgiven that little unpleasantness: we were both doing our duty on that occasion."

There was a few more minutes' business conversation, after which M. Louchard made his bow. But on the point of regaining the door he turned round abruptly and ejaculated, "By the by, I was very nearly forgetting another matter—the Crédit Parisien."

"What about the Crédit Parisien?" returned M. Macrobe, sharply.

"Well, nothing that concerns me, sir; for when you were obliging enough to let me have those shares, I sold out six months after, as you directed me, and made a good deal by your advice. But I rather fancy M. Gribaud has quarrelled with the *Crédit Parisien* as well as with you; and I thought you might like being warned."

"What makes you think this?"

"Oh, there are signs by which to detect it!" and M. Louchard's false beard smiled. "At the central telegraph station the C. P. telegrams had precedence of all except those of the Government; now, they are made to take their chance with the ruck. Then we have our secret inspector of the Bourse, who is a barometer in financial matters. Not so long ago he scowled at one of his subs for saying that the *Crédit Parisien* was like an over-blown balloon, and would burst some morning; yesterday that same sub remarked that the *Crédit Parisien* was certainly the best thing in the money market, and the barometer scowled again."

"The *Crédit Parisien* is a granite rock," said M. Macrobe, dismissing his interlocutor, "and next time you have money to spare buy shares in it and keep them. Good evening, Louchard. Don't forget about setting one of your men to watch when my son-in-law goes to Meudon."

The door closed behind M. Louchard, and the financier was left to his reflections. "My son-in-law is a better comedian than I imagined," he muttered. "Fancy his being able to keep a mistress within a year of his marriage, and whilst living under my roof, without my suspecting it! Well, there's comfort to be drawn from the fact in one way. If he makes so light of altar vows, he's not likely to let himself be hampered long by his late father's crotchets."

But M. Macrobe wished to make certain that there was no mistake in this, so he went and found Horace, and said to him at once, without preliminaries, "I have just been told the name of your opponent: it's the Prince of Arcola. Have you quarrelled with him? They say he is very bitter against you."

Horace colored, and the reply he made was stammered. The fact is, he felt surprised; but M. Macrobe not unnaturally set it down to guilt. "Louchard was right," said the financier to himself, whilst a gleam of genuine satisfaction lit up his face. "Well now, my son-in-law, this is lucky, for we can oblige you to do what we desire. A man who wants to seem pure in public life must begin by being so in private. You shall take us all to *Clairefontaine* before long, or else you will have to reckon with me as your wife's father."

CHAPTER XXXV.

INTER POCULA.

UNCONSCIOUS of his father-in-law's suspicions, unconscious of his wife's drift in recurring daily, with timid persistence, to the subject of *Clairefontaine*, unmindful of that pensive melancholy which was becoming her habitual mood, and which would have excited the anxiety of a more vigilant husband, Horace was wrapt in a state of mind that was none of the brightest. He was conscious of not being happy, of being on the brink of decisive events, and he asked himself with uncertainty in his heart what he should do next. A problem which only the weak pore over, for the strong solve it at once by instinctive action.

There were few places more propitious for strolling reveries than the equestrian alleys of the Bois de Boulogne, at that period of the Second Empire when artistic designs and irresponsible control of the municipal budget had made of that suburban wood the modern garden of Eden. Horace often rode there of an early morning, whilst the fawns and dryads that haunt the sylvan scene in the later day—*vulgo* the demi-monde and its worshippers—were yet a-sleeping. It was pleasant to amble up the shady avenue of the Triumphal Arch whilst M. Haussmann's watermen were laying the dust with their flexible tubes, whilst the milk-carts rattled into Paris with their hosts of tin cans, whilst the air was fresh, and the singing of the birds as yet undrowned by the voices of men. In the wood itself the lilacs put forth their first tender shoots, the drooping laburnums gave early promise of golden blossoms, the spreading chestnuts ahead of their brother trees dotted the spongy sand of the rows with white flowerlets like snow-flakes. Horace had all the alleys to himself. Not a human being visible, save the wood-keepers, who, however, are not human, belonging to the *genus* functionary; or here and there a matutinal British colonist galloping away his spleen, according to French notions, or simply giving himself an appetite for breakfast, if we accepted his own view of the case.

The environs of Paris on the outskirts of the Bois de Boulogne are so picturesque and varied, that Horace might have struck out a ride of new interest for himself every morning; and, as a matter of fact, he did spur forward now in one direction, now in another. But no matter what the line might be that he took up on starting, the end of his ride always brought him back to the same point, and that point was Meudon.

very clever fellow who writes them. He is
the Duke's man."

"The Duke's man?"

"I beg your pardon,"—and M. Lo-
chard, perceiving that—as is the name
we give to the writers of the Opposition
papers, are in our pay, and whose busi-
ness it is to write lies—in the other
case, it was the honest men in the
party of the outsiders. The trade re-
sulted in all. One of the signs shall de-
termine the success. The work will be the
same, and as the Duke's opponent is a
stranger to Hamburg, and there will be no
probability of his coming to Germany."

"What is he?" asked M. Macrobe, with-
out interest, for official candidates were
generally the persons of least impor-
tance in the contests to which they lent
their names.

"What is the Prince of Arcoia. Has
he been named in the papers yet?"

The man dropped a packet of letters
he was holding.

"The Prince of Arcoia!" he echoed.
"What can this mean? Why
has he not been named?"

"He may have been M. Macrobe; but
the Duke has covered now," answered
the man, drawing a packet.

M. Lo-
chard was aware that the Prince owed
a grudge to the Duke of Hamburg, and
was not his enemy; and a lady who
was his friend—

"I may as well give
you the name. It's M. de Mascine—
but not that the Duke is one with a wo-
man at the bottom of it. Say, I have it
on paper!"—M. Lo-
chard drew out a
notebook, and read: "When
the Duke of Hamburg, Rue Ste. Gene-
vieve, was the driver of his land-ord, draw-
ing a carriage. Name of girl, George-
tine."

"This means that there was no scan-
dal, that the Duke didn't get wind of
it. I have a story to tell you. I have
that it is a scandal. Proposed to her
and she refused. But, and in fact," be-
cause she was the mistress of her first
lover. A. M. de Mascine, dec. 2 par. 1. In
fact, she keeps her at Meudon, in a be-
autiful house, and she has her parents and
her sister living under the same roof with
her, for her own sake."

M. Lo-
chard closed his pocket-book, and
reverted to his air, without appearing to
know that there was any thing in his con-
versation of a nature to jar upon a fi-
nancier's ears. "The accounts for the Prince
of Arcoia's absence," he added, sardonically,
"is a very poor nobleman, and doesn't
count."

M. Mac-
robe had stood silent
for some time, and he had been
listening to every word

There was a few more minutes of
conversation, after which M. Lo-
chard made his bow. But on the point
of leaving the door he turned round and
said:

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conversation, after which M. Lo-
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chard made his bow. But on the point
of leaving the door he turned round and
said:

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ross the room, and put out a moist hand be squeezed.

It was M. Alcibiade Pochemolle.

Now, if there was a person in the world who evoked conflicting emotions in Horace's breast, it was this M. Alcibiade. When Horace thought of Georgette, it was to ask himself whether he would not have done better to marry her; but when his eyes fell upon M. Alcibiade, the reflection that arose was that, if he had married Georgette, this well-meaning but utterly insupportable youth would have been his brother. However, as the paw was there, no course lay open but to squeeze it, and the ceremony was performed with a tolerably successful pretence at cordiality. For this once—and, probably, by accident—M. Alcibiade looked almost a gentleman, being devoid of the scarlet and green scarfs, and the excessive hair-oil which were his customary adornments. It transpired later that he had been taking a bath in the river, and considered himself only half-dressed.

"Been up to the house, M. Horace—a—Monsieur le Duc?" he giggled, spasmodically. "No? Then come to have a chop here? That's what I was just going to order myself."

This was apparently designed for a timid hint, and Horace foreseeing that if not invited M. Alcibiade might possibly invite himself, suggested they could both take their chops together. At the same time, not desirous of being seen publicly banqueting with M. Alcibiade, he remarked on the advantages of a private room, and the waiter was bidden to show them to such a one.

"Yes, a private room's more stylish," approved M. Alcibiade, raising himself with some little awe on his boot-tips, as if suddenly mistrustful whether the number of his inches qualified him for lunching in private. "But stay, though; I mustn't forget, I expect a friend here by and by. You won't mind his being sent up to our private room, Monsieur le Duc?"

And M. Alcibiade articulated the words, "Monsieur le Duc," in an audibly stammered tone, with the intention of impressing them upon the waiter, who pricked up his ears.

But the waiter and the rest of the company were much more impressed upon when M. Alcibiade pursued, with the nervous boldness of one who makes a successful maiden-speech in public, "I say, waiter, a gentleman will be asking for me here, presently. His name's M. de Filoselle. When he comes, you'll show him up to the private room where I and my friend the Duke of Hautbourg will be eating. Mind you don't make a mistake."

Had the Czar of all the Muscovies or the

Schah of all the Persias been announced, their names could not have produced a more galvanic effect. Every fork stopped midway to every mouth; every bottle paused at half-cock in replenishing every glass; the smart lady at the counter made a sudden blot with the pen wherewith she was adding up a bill; and Horace passed through the public room, up to the staircase leading to the *Cabinets Particuliers*, between two rows of fixed eyeballs, like a cutter running the blockade of a double row of forts.

When he had vanished there was a buzz, as of many startled wasps.

"That's the member for Paris."

"Horace Gerold, the new Duke of Hautbourg, who winged the Revolutionist the other day."

"He doesn't look a very pleasant customer, with those black clothes of his, and that frowning face," remarked an ex-blanket vendor, rather scared.

"He is very handsome," put in the smart lady of the counter, scratching out her blot. "I guessed he must be somebody when he first came here."

"Don't say but he hasn't good looks; but what a proud face to him—just as if he was ready to stick one through for a nothing," commented another dealer, also rather scared, and late in the pickle way.

"I've seen him riding about here pretty often lately,—fine nag," observed a retired captain, cross of the Legion of Honor, hair clipped into bristles, purple physiognomy.

"So have I," assented he of the pickles.

"Did you say he rode about here every day?" quickly inquired a sociable stranger, who had entered the restaurant very soon after Horace, and seemed smilingly anxious to strike up a conversation.

"I didn't say every day, but I might have done it," returned the captain, with a praiseworthy regard for exactness. "The fact is, the Duke has been here every day this past fortnight or more, I do believe."

"Ah, dear me!" said the sociable stranger, and he began assaulting a *bisfect* with great vigor. Nobody knew the affable gentleman, but it was noticed by and by that he somehow persisted in lingering over his finished breakfast until the Duke of Hautbourg had gone. Then he jumped up, went out and looked very much as if he were following the young nobleman.

Meanwhile, M. Alcibiade, always giggling and moist, was doing the best honor in his power to the breakfast which Horace had ordered, and ingurgitating Rhine wine with the admirable confidence of those who are unused to that class of beverage. He drank it in tumblers: "For," said he practically, "those 'ere long-stemmed glasses

do slip about so in your fingers:" which was true enough, for one of the long-stemmed glasses had slipped about so from his fingers on to the floor.

"So you expect Monsieur Filoselle?" remarked Horace, as M. Alcibiade poured down his fourth tumbler.

"Yea, M. Horace—I mean, M. le Duc. This 'ere fizzing hock's good stuff, I've never tasted any of it before," and he smacked his lips.

"Pray let me fill your glass."

"Don't mind if I do, M. Horace—I beg pardon. I wish I could get into the way of calling you M. le Duc."

"Call me M. Horace. I prefer it."

"Oh, no! that would never do; a duke's a duke,—hang it!—and it's not every day I get the treat of breakfasting with one, or off such a feed as this. What did you say this here dish was,—salmis of pheasant? Devilish good! But, as you was asking, M. le Duc, I expect Filoselle. And I'll tell you,—I don't mind telling you, for you'll keep a secret—me and him is mounting a plot."

"A plot?"

"Ay" (down went tumbler number five): "you know Filoselle was spoony off my sister. I don't mind Filoselle; he's not of our rank, for we're *rentiers*, and he's obliged to work for his bread; but he's a good fellar. When we used to be at the shop, and I was in my school-days, he used to tip me a *nap*. now and then when I was hard up. I don't want any of 'em now; I've got plenty of cash" (M. Alcibiade slapped the twin pockets of his trousers, and some loose silver and copper therein litted up their jingling voices in testimony). "But all the same, I remember what Filoselle did for me, and one good turn deserves another. Well, Filoselle thinks he's been treated shabbily because he was cut out by the Prince of Arcola. You've heard about the Prince proposing to Georgette. No? *Tiens c'est drôle*, I thought the Prince might have told you, per'aps, being your friend. Well, he did; he proposed; came down in the nobbiest trap you ever saw, in black togs, with his decorations, and pink stockings to his footman's legs, quite the swell. And as I said to Filoselle, 'You couldn't expect, old chap, we should think about you when we had a chance of making Georgette a Princess. Bis'ness is bis'ness, hang it. However, Georgette refused the Prince—slap-up she did—told him she wouldn't have him.'"

M. Alcibiade heaved a chagrined sigh that degenerated into a hiccough. Horace was paying the keenest attention.

"Yes, refused him," continued M. Alcibiade, lugubriously. "It was a shocking

sell for us all. Mother she became yaller as a quince; father took it better—said something about its serving us right; but I didn't like it better than mother, for I'd already cut off and told some chaps about it's being cock sure; and when they see me now some of 'em says, 'Ow about the Prince?' which, you know, isn't pleasant for a fellar."

M. Alcibiade made an abrupt effort to reach the hock bottle, but only succeeded in knocking over the salt-cellar.

"Allow me," said Horace, replenishing his guest's glass, though not without some apprehension, for the sparkling iced liquid was beginning to produce its effect on M. Alcibiade's manner, but especially on his countenance.

"How hot it is!" exclaimed the latter, when his sixth tumbler had gone at one gulp the way of the fifth; and he drew out his handkerchief to fan himself. As he did so a key fell out of his pocket on to the carpet.

Horace picked it up and restored it to him.

"This is yours, I think?"

"Oh, thank you, M. le Duc!—(hiccough)—I mushn' lose that. Admits into our house and garden. It's my latch-key, that I let myself in with when I go to Paris on a spree, and don't return—(hiccough, grin and wink)—t—t—till morning."

The impressed waiter here entered after the cannon-ball manner of his kind, cleared away the salmi and broken salt-cellar, introduced *omelette soufflée*, Roquefort cheese and pulled bread, and vanished with an order for coffee, *chartreuse*, and cigars. Whilst he was in the room M. Alcibiade endeavored to maintain a dignified attitude, which resulted in his almost rolling off his chair and having to be propped up. When the waiter was gone, he fell to on the omelette and remarked perplexedly on the giddy properties of fresh air, which had almost knocked him off his chair just now. He rallied at the coffee, perhaps under the influence of a giant glass of seltzer-water, which Horace counselled him to take; and having inserted a flat *panatella* screw-wise into the corner of his mouth, and begun to suck it as if it were a stick of liquorice, showed himself disposed for more talk.

"You were telling me about the interesting plot between yourself and M. Filoselle," said Horace, handing him a lighted match for his cigar.

"Ha! I've got to go on with that—let's see where I was—I was saying how that silly girl had refused the Prince—yes, that's it—and how the chaps was chaffing me, which wasn't pleasant," resumed M. Alcibiade, with intermingled hiccoughing

and puffing. "Well, we was down in the mouth for a good ten days afterwards, asking ourselves what she should be so stoopid for, and hoping she would think better of it, and send back for the Prince, but she didn't, but only moped and cried by herself. And then came your father's funeral, M. le Duc, to which me and the guv'nor both went, because M. Gerold (hiccough) once saved the guv'nor's life, and gratitude, as the guv'nor says, ought to come as regular after a good deed, as profits after a good investment. We was at the cemetery, M. le Duc, me and the guv'nor (hiccough), and we was quite close when you grabbed hold of that radical cove by the throstle and tort him to behave himself by rolling him into the pit and yourself on to the top of him. And we waited in Brussels till next day to hear what would come of it, and me and the guv'nor was precious glad when we heard that you'd spoilt his fin for him so that he wouldn't jaw away out of his turn again." (Two consecutive hiccoughs. M. Alcibiade struck a match to relight his *panatella*, which had gone out.)

"M. Filoselle was at the funeral too. Is that what you were going to say?" interrupted Horace, frowning slightly, and with some impatience.

"Ha! I was coming to that. Yes, M. le Duc, that's just it. We met Filoselle there, too, glum and genteel in his black clothes, but he made believe to be short-sighted and stared the other way when we passed (hiccough), and I don't believe he'd have spoken to us at all, if the guv'nor hadn't waited for him afterwards, and held out his hand and asked him to make it up; for the guv'nor always stuck by Filoselle. Filoselle hesitated a bit, but then gave in and asked how Georgette was, in a stiff-starched voice like. But when he heard how Georgette had turned the Prince off — for the guv'nor spouted it all out — (hiccough), he brightened up — my eye how he did brighten up, and you couldn't have seen him happier if he'd become emperor. 'Ah, my adored Georgette!' shouted he, right out aloud; 'I knew you'd remain faithful to your Ector;' then he almost blubbed, and so did the guv'nor (hiccough), saying nothing ever came of turning off one man to try and get a better one; and as I knew it was no good hoping to make Georgette understand reason, now, I said the same thing, and we all went and dined together, Filoselle standing treat, for he said he'd been earning cash by the heaps lately. And when the sweets was on the table — *compote d'ananas* and such like — the guv'nor (hiccough) drank Filoselle's health, and said that all might come right yet, and then us three — me, the guv'nor and him — mounted that plot

of ours, which is to help Filoselle to get married, as if nothing had happened."

"How so?" Horace's eyes peered anxiously into the besotted physiognomy opposite him.

"Oh, it's like this, (puff-hiccough-puff): Georgette only told mother, but not father, why she had refused the Prince, but father knows it was because she loved somebody else; and that somebody else can only be Filoselle, as he says, and Filoselle is of the same opinion. But mother wouldn't hear talk of Filoselle yet, for she's too sore about the Prince, and maybe she hopes he'll still come back and get Georgette to accept him — which 'ud be stunning, but too good to be true. So I come here twice a week to meet Filoselle, and take letters from him to Georgette and bring back the answers. This here cigar of mine won't keep alight, (hiccough) — this is the second time I've come. I took a letter last time, and I bring back the answer to-day. That is, I don't bring one, for there wasn't any."

"There was no answer?"

"No," M. Alcibiade grinned, hiccoughed, and put on an arch leer. "Georgette seemed surprised when she got the letter, but that of course was all gammon, such as girls love to play. She won't give me an answer just yet, but by and by she will; and meantime I'll warrant she'll get talking mother round on the sly, as Filoselle advises her to do in the letter. My eye, Filoselle does love her, and if you want to see a chap spoony, look at him — he says that the girl who'll turn off a Prince to keep faithful to the man she likes, deserves to be fed on gold out of a diamond spoon, that's what Filoselle says."

Horace swallowed his glass of chartreuse in silence and then said, looking hard at M. Alcibiade: "Did Mademoiselle Georgette refuse the Prince beyond recall?"

"Oh, yes! (hiccough), cooked his goose completely. Manette, our maid, said a pin's head might have knocked him down when he went out. This here second cigar won't (p-p-puff) draw better than the first — M. le Duc, when a gal is spoony off one chap, it seems it ain't like with us men; she can't abide the sight of the others. I'm not like that — I love all the gals. Still, I bet if Filoselle had had a sister that had been making love to me, and the Prince of Arcola had had another sister that had been doing the same, I should have sent Filoselle's sister to the rightabout in very quick time and not been such a muff as Georgette."

Horace looked at his watch. There was some agitation in his manner.

"I see it is nearly one, M. Pochemolle. You will excuse my ringing for the waiter."

"I wonder at Filoselle not coming yet," hiccupped M. Alcibiade, "but, by gad, now I think of it, per'aps he may be in the billiard-room all this while, and so missed the waiter." He staggered to his legs. "I say, though, M. le Duc," (this as the bill was being settled), "it's awfully kind of your stumpin' up for me in this way, hanged if it isn't. I owe you a feed, mind, and we'll have some more of that fizzing hock. I sha'n't forget it in a hurry, that I won't." He clutched at his hat on the peg, but losing his balance at that critical moment, and being obliged to hold on by his head covering, was within an ace of tearing it in two. "Will you come down and shake hands with Filoselle, M. le Duc?" was his next remark. He was grasping the back of the chair to steady himself, and speaking with a meritoriously determined attempt at gravity.

"I am afraid I must forego that pleasure: I must be at the Corps Législatif at two. Pray remember me to him."

Horace was obliged to submit, not to the handshaking, but to the affectionate embrace of M. Alcibiade, whose sole regret was that this brotherly ceremony was not witnessed by the whole population of Meudon assembled. The embrace of a Duke had, however, this satisfactory effect, that it for a moment sobered him and enabled him to totter down stairs, holding his head erect, without breaking his neck, thanks partly to the kindly assistance of the waiter, the collar of whose coat he clutched. Horace, having to wait till his horse was round, did not immediately follow him. He paced the small room with an excited step but a beaming eye.

"Then she loves me still as much as ever," were the words he would have doubtless uttered had he spoke his thoughts aloud. "She loves me above every thing on earth since she can make such a sacrifice as this for me. And I who accused her of having jilted that wretched traveller so as to win the Prince! I who cast in her teeth that her refusal of the Prince was only a comedy she was playing to some scheming end or other! How see her now to ask her, pardon, to make my peace with her and vow that nothing shall ever come between us again. I must see her alone, but how?"

His foot struck against something on the ground. He looked down. There was the key which M. Alcibiade ought to have put back into his pocket, but which he had put on to the carpet instead, his faculties being absorbed in hock. The key, M. Alcibiade had mentioned, admitted to the garden as well as to the house. Horace had only to go down stairs to restore it to the owner.

He hesitated half a moment, and then kept it.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

M. GRIBAUD MAKES A SPEECH.

ON leaving Meudon, he rode straight into Paris. Like most ambitious men, whose range of mind is not extensive, Horace Gerold could devote himself but to one thing at a time; but to that thing, whatever it was, he gave himself up wholly. When he was pursuing love affairs the entire world might have been dead for all the thoughts he bestowed upon it; all his own interests even, except the particular one in hand, were for the time being banished from his reflections. On the other hand, when he was engaged in politics, politics were the only aims he had present before him. They engrossed him as if he loved them, which he did not; or as if he understood them, which he did still less. Thus it was that twenty minutes after leaving Meudon, where he had resolved that before long he would see Georgette, and see her alone, he was riding down the Champs Elysées in a brown study, his mind already roaming on to scenes where M. Gribaud, official candidatures, and parliamentary speeches, played the leading parts, and whence love consequently was excluded. At home he found Angélique not anxious about his absence during the whole morning, as he had rather feared she would be. His morning rides were become so regular; and so regularly did they lengthen every day, that she was resigned to them, never asked where he had been, never showed that she suspected it; but only inquired in her sweet way whether he had had a good ride, and on occasions like the present, when he returned extra-late, whether he had lunched.

Answering both questions in the affirmative this time, he kissed his young wife rather more tenderly than usual. This is a way with husbands who have faithlessness on their conscience; and try to persuade themselves that by simulating a great deal of love, they are making honorable amends for the total want of it. The only possible inconvenience of the system is that of the wife seeing through the device, which generally happens.

"Nothing new, child?" he asked, in appendix to the more than usually tender kiss, and Angélique replied that there was nothing; the remark being echoed by the Cri-

mean Hero, who, astride upon a campstool, in the garden, opposite to Angélique and Aunt Dorothée, on chairs, had been reading them the morning papers.

"There has been a shocking murder. An uncle cut into small pieces by his nephew, and left wrapped up in bits of newspapers on curb-stones," ejaculated Aunt Dorothée, dismally. "I shall dream about this to-night."

"Yes, there's 'that in the way of news,'" laughed the Crinean Hero, "and amongst the electoral intelligence I see that Arcola has issued his address. You must have had a pretty serious tiff with him, Duke, to bring him up against you like this. Why, not a month ago you were hand in glove together."

"The Prince is a Bonapartist and I am not," answered Horace, uneasily, and taking up the paper.

"The address is tame," observed the Hero, as he saw Horace glancing at it.

"Very," said Horace, when he had read it through; but, perhaps, in his inmost mind he thought differently, for when he went out again to go down to the House, his brow was knit, and he stepped out of his brougham, saying to himself, that it would be a pretty thing if his political career was to be cut abruptly short by this Prince of Arcola.

It was the first time he had appeared at the Corps Législatif since his father's funeral, and on his crossing the threshold of the Debate Room, a hush fell on the assembly, then gathered for the last time prior to the dissolution. Much curiosity was there amongst the honorable members to see how their colleague would disport himself after his famous duel; some anxiety to behold whether his ducal honors had changed him, and whether he would be as much of a Radical as before. The Ministerialists on the extreme Right, who knew no compromise with duty, but voted fearlessly before God and man as they were ordered to do, wondered how M. Gribaud would bear himself towards the new duke. They had heard that M. de Hautbourg was to be opposed by Government, but they were half prepared for some touching scene of reconciliation on this last day. A solemn recantation of errors on the one hand, a magnanimous absolution on the other; much as on the breaking-up day at a private school, the boy who has been unruly during the half-year makes his humble *mea culpa*, and promises to behave better next term on condition of not being expelled. Indeed, the proceedings on the closing day of session in the Corps Législatif, closely reminded one of going-home-day, in a well-conducted academy for young gentlemen.

First, the head-usher, Minister M. Gribaud, made a speech, shortly summarizing the events of the term, complimenting the pupils on the amount of work they had done, and extolling the virtue of obedience, without which no progress is possible. Then the best pupil in the school—that is, the most prominent member on the Right—rose, and bore grateful testimony to the assistance received during work-hours by their much-esteemed teacher. He hoped M. Gribaud had found no reason to complain of the conduct of his schoolfellows, and promised on their behalf that they would endeavor to merit his approbation, both by studious attention to his precepts during the recess, and by diligent practice of the same when they returned to their work next half. Lastly, the Head-Master, President, blandly reminded everybody that they would go back to the bosom of their families with that satisfaction which the accomplishment of duty always brings—the *mens conscia recti* of which the poet speaks. He had nothing more to say but to wish them pleasant holidays, and hope that next time he and they met again, he would see them all in the enjoyment of good health; and so:—

Ita domum, saturum; venit heesperus; ite Capella.

Horace's arrival did not interrupt this programme, for nothing had yet commenced. The boys were emptying their desks of their contents and making convenient bundles of them to carry away. Some amused themselves by turning the keys of their desks in the locks, making *snap, snap* noises. The keys were to be left in the desks to-day, and not carried away, so that there was no harm in damaging them. Everybody was more or less eccentrically attired in shooting-coats and colored shirts, indicative of precipitate departure to the railway-station as soon as the school-gates should be opened; and everybody was talking at his loudest, until the entry of the unruly pupil produced the lull already mentioned.

Then, just as at school when the unruly pupil appears, all the other boys who are in disgrace instinctively rally round him in order to feel less isolated in their guiltiness; so when Horace took his seat he at once became the centre of a group of some thirty or forty honorable members, who, having either made incautious speeches, or so far forgotten themselves as once or twice to vote wrong; or been in any other way disobedient to M. Gribaud, during the past session, were aware that they would be left to shift for themselves at the next elections. Amongst these were the Alsatian count

who wanted Protestant school-teachers, the Gascon marquis who wished to have his brother made a Catholic bishop, and numbers of other worthies of the same calibre. All these gentlemen were vehemently opposed to the system of official candidatures. They had been official candidates themselves; but that didn't matter. Liberalism simmered in their patriotic souls. They were full of the people's rights. They could no longer conscientiously submit to see France deprived of her just liberties. Next session when re-elected — and every one of these interesting neo-liberals made certain that he would be re-elected — they would form a constitutional opposition party of which they trusted M. le Duc de Hautbourg would assume the leadership; and they would turn out M. Gribaud, not a doubt of it.

A peculiarity about these gentlemen was that, although each felt sure of his own return, they all struck commiserating attitudes in alluding to one another's chances.

"So Gribaud is going to oppose us? Well, I don't care for myself; in fact I wouldn't have accepted Government assistance, if it had been offered me. But it's uncommonly hard on you — you who only got in by an ace last time, with the bishop, prefect, and two hundred mayors, all pushing you together."

Horace was favored with condolences of this pattern by the whole of the forty.

"A crying shame, I call it, Monsieur le Duc."

"I'm proud to say Gribaud hasn't insulted me with any offers of patronage, else I would have cast them back in his face, after the manner in which he has behaved towards you." (This from a deputy who an hour before had told M. Gribaud that he had a wife and family, and that the loss of his seat would be beggary to him.)

"It seems, M. le Duc, that the Prince of Arcole is making himself very popular at Hautbourg. He has gone down there for a canvass, and is sowing his money broadcast." (This was a charitable fiction, invented on the spot.)

"I hear he is going to build them a new church." (Other charitable invention.)

"I despise the Government that sanctions bribery." (This from an honorable member who on his last return had, under Government sanction, invested ten thousand francs in corduroys, five thousand in felt hats, eight thousand in new vestments for rural clergy, and kept seventy-seven parishes drunk on the day of poll from morn till even-tide.)

"I never felt any esteem for Gribaud. Did you see what an insolent look he gave you, M. le Duc?"

"Ay, he would have deserved a slap on the face for that look."

"And would have got it, if he had given it to me."

Now here was another fiction. In order to reach his place Horace was obliged to pass M. Gribaud, and, in so doing, habitually favored him with an inclination of the head, which the Minister, of course, returned. But his Excellency's bows were far from insolent, or even stiff. They were the cautious bobs of a statesman, who, with not much diplomacy to aid him, had got to steer his way between excess of affability and the counter-excess of reserve. M. Gribaud had no desire to take up the cudgels with Horace. If the latter would koo-too to him, he asked for nothing more. As to his opposing him at Hautbourg, that was a trifle, for Horace had only to make his submission any time before the poll to be hoisted into a seat somewhere or other — only the seat would not be Hautbourg, if M. Gribaud could help it. It would be a seat whence Horace could be turned out on misbehavior — say one of those halcyon constituencies near the Pyrenees, where the wittiest nation under heaven went to the poll in droves of a thousand head, and, on a wink from their prefect, would attach thirty thousand names to a petition, calling upon their deputy to resign his place, or leave off making speeches against the Government. M. Gribaud infused all these sentiments into his bow, which would have been a very essay on Imperialist statecraft if bows, like verbal utterances, could have been taken down in short-hand. And the Minister did more, for, in the usher-like speech to his pupils going home, he held out the fold of salvation to Horace, offered him extrication from the Radical whirlpool where he was floundering, and a safe standing-ground on the *terra firma* of Bonapartism.

"I cannot conclude," said he, amidst the loud, long, and continued cheering which had greeted the first part of his oration, commenting upon the industrious labors of the session, — "I cannot conclude without a reference to one of our young and distinguished colleagues, whom we all rejoice to see in his place to-day, after the recent heavy domestic calamity which has overtaken him. (Hear, hear.) Gentlemen, I need not say that, in his bereavement, the honorable gentleman has our most heartfelt sympathies. It was my fortunate privilege to be, at one time, bound by ties of close friendship with the eminent Patriot who has died upon a foreign soil, and though we were afterwards estranged from each other by those differences which, alas! too often divide public men — for, in devoting our-

selves to our country's welfare, gentlemen, it is seldom that we are not compelled to sacrifice our private feelings — I can say that no one regretted the circumstance more than myself; that no one felt to the last more admiration for the chivalrous illusions of the statesman, more reverence and affection for the personal character of the man. (Loud cheers.) I would it were possible to pass unnoticed an event with which the lamented decease of our great countryman is in some way associated — I mean the scene that attended that noble Patriot's funeral; but I feel that to do so would be to miss the occasion of deducing a moral, which I hope our honorable colleague will lay seriously to heart. There are political classes and political theorists with whom no man can sympathize. (Loud and prolonged cheering.) Our honorable colleague has been able to judge for himself what is the worth of the fraternity which these persons preach and never practice. But let him be assured that, in that party, such men are not the exception; they are the rule. It is the party of envy, calumny, and incapacity, the party where every man thinks himself born with a soul to command, who has not even the patience, fortitude, and modesty to obey. For men of mere honesty to ally themselves with this faction is to risk contamination in its most insidious forms; but for a man who is gifted with youth, a great historical name, and surpassing talents to lend even his fellowship to it, would be a thing in every way sad and deplorable. It would be the wreck of a promising career, which might shine with a peerless lustre if devoted to the cause which we on these benches serve — that of order, of justice, of the prosperity and true greatness of France.

(Enthusiastic and continued cheering from the legislators on the right. The forty malcontents, clustered together in a lump, sneer, snigger, dig their elbows into one another's ribs, and whisper, "Gammon!")

Half an hour afterwards the portals had closed upon Horace's first session as a law-maker. Vehicles of every description were scurrying away from the door of the House to the four great termini. Honorable ex-deputies were bidding each other good-by and good luck; and Horace himself, ex-member for Paris, sauntered eastwards through the streets of the Circumscription which he no longer represented. There was a crowd collected without the gates of the building to watch the deputies disperse, and as every one of these gentlemen was cordially and contemptuously detested by the Radical element of the Parisian population, Horace benefited by the contrast which his relative liberalism afforded, and was cheered by about two dozen gamins. As he lifted his hat in acknowledgment of

this cheap ovation, he remembered that on that same spot, many years before he himself was born, his father had been rapturously acclaimed by a countless multitude stretching as far as the eye could see. It was under the reign of Charles X., when outspoken Liberals were few, and when every parliamentary session offered a series of stirring popular triumphs to those who dared speak. How different his father's beginning from his own! Yet, the liberal cause had even greater need of champions now than under the Bourbons, and a career as distinguished as his father's had been open to him had he chosen to follow it. Why had he not?

Then came the reflections — But what had Manuel Gerold's career, what had his speeches and example profited, since France was in 1857 politically lower than in 1827? Was it worth while to preach freedom all one's days, to see it at last strangled in a night by a crew of adventurers, who, red-handed after the murder, had only to appeal to the nation to be forthwith absolved by seven million voices! Amongst those seven millions there were assuredly many, who, before cheering the hero of the *coup-d'état*, had cheered Manuel Gerold; and was it not the vanity of vanities to endeavor to please such weathercocks? Horace asked himself whether his father would not have done more for the true interests of France, if, instead of advocating an ideal Republic for which men were not yet ripe, he had accepted the forms of Government existing, and applied himself to improve, without subverting them. If, for instance, all the men of intellect who assailed the dynasty of Louis Philippe (and Manuel Gerold was of the number) had joined in consolidating it, the senseless revolution of '48 would never have happened, and in 1857 France would have been in the enjoyment of one of the freest constitutional monarchies in Europe. "My father was ahead of his time; I will keep on a level with mine," mentally ejaculated Horace. "If France is not Republican why should I be? The majority of the country accept the Empire: they vote for it, they prefer it to other forms of government: I may be of a contrary opinion, but as a citizen the most patriotic thing I can do is to submit. They talk to us of the prosperity of England, but England is only prosperous and free because the minorities there have learned to obey the majorities. Every man does not set up a standard of government for himself, and try and force it upon his fellows. Where is the inducement to the men who rule us to give us liberties if we say: 'Whatever you do, whether you govern us well or ill, we will combat you?' Systematic opposition excuses systematic despotism. An Eng-

lishman in my place would manage to be loyal and liberal at the same time:—liberal from principle, loyal by expediency. So will I be. By loyalty is not meant servility; I shall be no official candidate or supporter of Gribaud's. I will struggle to establish in France the parliamentary liberties which our neighbors have; and if I succeed I shall have spent my life to better purpose than as a Republican agitator, hurrying on my countrymen by utopian doctrines to bootless revolutions."

He quickened his pace. There were seductions enough in the career of French Whig, which he was sketching out for himself: it led to honors and power, in the first place, to reputation in the next. But it was indispensable that he should not lose his seat in the House; and, here, the dispiriting prognostications of his forty malcontent colleagues of a sudden chilled him. They had done their very utmost as good colleagues that they were to represent his case as desperate, and as he was in total ignorance of the steps which M. Macrobe had taken to insure his return (to do him justice, he would never have lent his countenance to those steps), he saw the Prince of Arcola in his mind's eye as already triumphant. There was but one way—one infallible way—to prevent that triumph, and Horace shook off the last relics of repugnance which he had for it.

"I must go to Clairefontaine," murmured he resolutely. "The estate is mine. It was unjustly confiscated by the ruffians of '93, and if it was bought back with slave money, the five million francs we have paid to charities during the last five years are a sufficient expiation. There is not another family would have done so much. And besides, in my hands the estate will be an instrument of good: I shall use the influence it gives me for the welfare of France."

And he shaped his course towards the Law Courts, where he hoped to find Emile.

barristers' benches almost empty; but the judges were at their post,—seven of them—and, what is more, they were all attentive.

Emile was speaking.

Horace subsided noiselessly into a seat, and behind him heard the following muttered dialogue between a shabby man who took snuff and an old woman who complained of rheumatics:—

The Shabby Man.—"Hark to him there, Madame Pomardier, he has made another point. His logic's close."

The Rheumatic Woman.—"Mon dien, Monsieur Garbillaud, I knew that the young man had talent, and that's why I said to the poor young thing: 'My dear, if you will go to law—though, in my opinion, going to law for justice is like going to a puddle for spring-water—I'd see young M. Gerold. He won a suit for some neighbors of mine, poor bodies, that would never have had a sou to this day if it hadn't been for his taking up their case; but that, my dear, doesn't prove that he'll get you righted, for good luck doesn't come twice in one season,' said I."

The S. M.—"Hark to him again Madame Pomardier. That last argument came pat down on the nail. Do you take a pinch?"

The R. W.—"Thank you, not any for me, M. Garbillaud. There is that Municipal Guardsman who has swung open that door again: that man can never have had the rheumatics to let in draughts of cold air as he does. Well, as I was saying, the poor young creature she would go to law, for, says she: 'Madame Pomardier, there must be a God in heaven to prevent the weak being wronged;' and said I, 'My dear, about there being a God in heaven I don't doubt, but as to his interfering with these sort of matters I don't believe it's his way, for,' says I, 'if I was to count up on my fingers all the folk I've seen get less than they deserve, and all the other folks I've seen get more than they had a right to, I shouldn't have fingers enough; and I should be sorry to say that all was God's fault, my dear, it would be laying too much on him.' However, good words never yet mended sore trouble. She said she had right on her side, and so far as that goes, it would be a sin to gainsay her. She was properly married to her dead husband, and for that man's family to say that she wasn't and that there was some irregularity in the wedding, owing to its having been done abroad, and for them to seize that pretext to try and take away from her the two thousand francs a year, that ought to be hers, and her title of wife and widow which is what the poor young creature most cares

CHAPTER XXXVII.

MANUEL GEROLD'S SONS DIVIDE HIS INHERITANCE.

"I THINK you will find Maitre Emile Gerold in the Second Chamber," said an affable Briefless, in the Pleaders' Hall.

The Second Chamber was one of the Civil Courts, and not often crowded. Horace proceeded to it, pushed the folding doors, and entered into quasi solitude. The auditory was scantily attended, the

for, is a crying shame as I do say; and so did M. Gerold say it when she went to him about it. And I declare, it goes to one's heart, it does, to see the way the poor thing is looking at him, there, as he speaks for her—see, M. Garbillaud.”

Horace followed the direction of the worthy Madame Pomardier's glance, and saw a slight young woman with a careworn face, dressed in deep black and holding a child of three or four on her knee, and gazing at Emile with an expression of anxiety and yearning suspense utterly impossible to depict. She seemed to be restraining her breath, lest the faintest sound should prevent her defender's voice from reaching the judge's ears; and when he produced any telling argument, looked from him to them with suppliant, wistful inquiry to see whether they were attending and had caught the words; and then from the judges to her child as though to mark whether, young as he was, he did not understand that it was his mother's honor that was being debated. Horace turned from this group to Emile, who was speaking as he always spoke, unaffectedly and persuasively. His manner was not that of some of his more eminent colleagues who pocket an enormous fee, read your brief half through, and plead your cause like a tired parson reading the evening lessons. There was, probably, no fee at all in this case, but the brief had been read through, every line; and more than read through—pondered over long and thoughtfully, for the words in their eloquent earnestness flowed limpid and unhesitating, coming from a mind and heart both full of their subject. There would have been a fine opportunity for a true Radical barrister to have howled democratic platitudes, shrieked anathemas against the rich who trample down the poor, and earned the good graces of the gallery by insulting the judges. But Emile as usual neglected this mode of serving his client's interests. He was modest and respectful towards the judges; and the result was no failure, for when the Imperial Magistrates returned from their council-room, it was with a judgment for the Plaintiff, on all points.

The young woman rose with her child in her arms, tottered forward to grasp the hands of her defender and swooned at his feet.

Emile lifted her gently, committed her to the care of some friends, amongst whom the worthy Madame Pomardier, who was blessing his name aloud; and came away, happy from his humble triumph, but courting no thanks. Horace met him at the door.

It was evening and the courts were being

closed, so after Emile had unrobed himself in the vestuary, the brothers set off for the Rue Ste. Geneviève, where Emile still resided notwithstanding that the retirement of M. Pochemolle had given him a new landlord, this new landlord was also a draper and kept the name of Pochemolle with the sign of the Three Crowns over his door as of old, the privilege of doing so having been conceded to him for an increase of purchase-money. This practice, by the way, is not an uncommon one in trade, and nobody ever appears to suspect that writing Pochemolle over a house where Pochemolle no longer flourishes, has the same sort of morality about it as pasting “Old Port” on a bottle that does not contain that beverage. On the way from the Law Courts, Horace did not allude to the subject which had brought him to see Emile. He talked about the trial with emotion and admiration; and was still full of the topic when he found himself seated in his old quarters in the lodgings on the third floor above. Nothing was changed there any more than down stairs, where Horace had almost expected to see Georgette seated at her counter behind the window and look up at him as he passed. At Horace's marriage, Emile had removed into his rooms, abandoning his own to a stranger, and there stood all the things as Horace had left them, books, pictures, the table where Georgette used to lay his letters; and the shelves off which she had helped him collect the prohibited writings, that day when she had come to warn him of the domiciliary visit: “Why, I declare, you even use my old pen-holder,” said he, glancing at the desk and smiling at Emile.

“My favorite pen-holder,” answered his brother affectionately.

Horace took up a roll of paper that lay on the sofa—it looked like a music-roll—and, playing with it mechanically, said: “And do you mean to cleave forever to these rooms and to this life, old fellow? I was listening to you to-day. There is not a man in the Corps Législatif who can speak as you do, and I don't believe there are three at the Bar who can speak better. Every thing would be open to you if you had any ambition. Do you remember my asking you some time ago what your day-dreams were? You surely have some visions of greatness, glory, or public usefulness?”

As if to answer Horace's question, a waiter from a neighboring cookshop at that moment appeared with a basket containing Emile's dinner—the fare of an anchorite; and whilst this pitifully frugal repast was being set on the table, flanked by a half-pint decanter of the commonest *vin ordinaire*,

a poor-looking girl of twelve, who had come in behind the waiter, and turned suddenly shy at beholding a stranger, stammered: "Mother said you had left word I was to call for some wine, M. Gerold."

Blushing as if he were being caught in a mean act, Emile went to a cupboard and drew out two bottles with the well-known crimson seals of the *Château Lafite*, also a parcel. The girl seemed doubtful about the parcel being for her; but Emile whispered something, and the girl withdrew, thanking and courtesying. The same instant entered the concierge.

"M. Emile, there's that cripple down below who called the other day. He wanted to thank you for what you had sent him, but couldn't get through the streets fast enough to be at the door against your return. As he isn't able to climb the staircase, he asked me to come up and say how much obliged he is to you."

"You see," said Emile to Horace, and reddening anew, "you have lighted at the hour when I sometimes receive visits." And as he was speaking the door opened before a third applicant. This time it was a young and intelligent workman in a blouse. He had some books under his arm, and had come to return them, as well as borrow others.

"Well, Denis," said Emile, when the workman had chosen the volumes he wanted — volumes of Diderot's "Encyclopédie" — "I hope you and your friends have settled matters amicably with your employers, and that there will be no strike?"

"We feel that we have a grievance, M. Gerold," answered the workman, in a frank, respectful voice. "The profits of our employers have gone on increasing, and so has the price of living, yet the wages in our trade have not changed since the last ten years. But I have told the men what you thought, and they deputed me to say that they would be guided by you, and that if, after giving them a hearing, you were of opinion that their present demands were not fair, they would modify them."

Horace had not uttered a word during this succession of interviews; but whilst the workman was speaking he opened the scroll he had taken up. It was an address signed by five thousand mechanics of the Tenth Circumscription, and offering Emile their suffrages for the seat which he himself was about to vacate. The memorialists wrote that they had been reluctantly compelled to vote against M. Horace Gerold at the last election, being persuaded that his views did not tally with theirs, but they had the utmost confidence in the principles of M. Emile, and, if he would

come forward, undertook to return him free of expense. Horace laid down this document with feelings easy to understand, and watched the workman take his leave: which he did with the air of a man who bows to nothing save intellect, but bends the knee before that.

When he was gone Horace took up the scroll again.

"And have you accepted this offer?" said he to Emile.

"Accepted an offer that contains an implied slight on you!" answered Emile, sadly and a little reproachfully. "You could not think it. In so far as public opinion is concerned, together we stand or fall."

"Yes, we will, will we not?" exclaimed Horace in an outburst of eagerness, laying his hand on his brother's shoulders. "Let us stand by each other, Emile; and we may attain fame side by side. I have resolved upon going to Clairefontaine, and do you come with me. Our landed interest can insure our being both elected in the department, and we can labor together for the true interests of France, and for the glory of our own family name. Whilst our father was alive I respected his ideas about Clairefontaine, but by renouncing that estate any longer we shall be discarding the means of doing a great good: we shall be like soldiers throwing away their best weapons before battle."

He spoke at length and enthusiastically, unfolding all the plans he was forming, and revealing new ones, as they started extemporized to his brain. The immense services that could be rendered to the Liberal cause was the chord on which he harped most strenuously, knowing that it was the one which would strike the surest echo; and the burden of his whole discourse was that for such an end as that any honorable means were justifiable.

Emile listened to him without apparent surprise, though not able to repress the shade of disappointment that stole over his face.

"I was prepared for your resolution about Clairefontaine," said he quietly. "And the moment you differed from any of the opinions which rendered the sacrifice imperative on our father, a like sacrifice ceased to be binding upon you. But it gives me some pain, dear fellow, to think of your rallying to the Second Empire; I would have heard a great deal of bad news sooner than that."

"But I don't rally in the sense of liking or respecting this régime, nor for my own profit," exclaimed Horace. "Why, man, to take a comparison, I shall be only doing what you did this very afternoon. Did you respect the judges before whom you

pleaded? You know what kind of men the Empire has placed on the judicial bench, yet in your client's interest you silenced all your own feelings, spoke reverentially to these men, and won your cause. Well, France will be my client; I will plead for her rights, and in order to obtain them will defer to those who hold her freedom in their keeping. That is all."

The comparison was not inapt, but it failed to shake Emile, who answered: "We cannot always make our sentiments fit with logic; and perhaps I shall have given you the best of my reasons when I say that as our father's bones must rest in exile so long as this empire lasts, I could never have the courage to support it. Then, I do not believe the Empire will ever restore our liberties, for those who respect freedom do not begin by destroying it. But supposing I should be mistaken, it seems to me there would still be grounds for refusing our allegiance. The establishment of the Second Empire was one of the most wanton outrages ever perpetrated upon a peaceful community, and it is like offering a premium for such acts when honorable men lend their countenance to those who commit them."

"That is all very well," cried Horace, excitedly, "but the remark may be reduced to this: that you would rather see France fettered under the Second Empire than free from it?"

"Yes, I would," replied Emile firmly. "I think in the first place our country should learn what it costs to set up a despot; and in the next I would not let crowned desperadoes suppose that they may be left to reign in peace by restoring liberties which they have dishonestly plundered. Of a robber we ask more than restitution, we demand atonement. I would have patriots hold aloof from the authors of *coups-d'état*—leave them to themselves until they fell by their own weakness, or finished as they began in violence."

There was a silence. Emile had spoken with perfect calm, but with a kindling light in his eye—just the light that comes of immovable purpose assailed by sharp arguments, the spark that flashes between flint and steel. Horace exclaimed dejectedly: "It is no use trying to convert you. You reason like a man who sets up an ideal world for himself, and will not see that you can benefit your species more by taking account of their foibles and errors and bearing with them, than by preaching to them a standard of political excellence that is quite beyond their reach. Progress does not fly on the wing, it plods on tediously. In a hundred years men will not yet be ripe for the republic you propose.

Why then sacrifice your life to it? Look at our father's career. What was it?—a pure and generous one; but whom has it benefited?"

"Every lover of what is good," answered Emile, quickly. "Every man who proposes to his fellows a high standard of excellence in politics, art, or social conduct, is a benefactor of humanity. And what does it matter if our father's example has found few imitators? Did Raphael paint his 'Transfiguration' in vain because no picture like it has since been produced; or did Milton write to no purpose because 'Paradise Lost' will remain unrivalled? The life of an honest man is a beautiful poem; and every human being who reads it will feel better, stronger, more hopeful from it. But even if none understood the life, and if none were found to take pattern by it, there it would still remain—the highest, finest, and noblest work of God." He took down from a shelf one of the early editions of a book, then but lately published, and interdicted in France, Victor Hugo's "Châtiments;" and pointing to a page, said, "Read this passage. Do you think this will be thrown away? It will redeem our character as a people in the eyes of future generations. When historians write that seven million Frenchmen fell down and worshipped the man who enslaved them, it will be remembered that there was a patriot who wrote this, and that he found companions, our father amongst them, and the memory of these few men will save a whole nation from odium."

Horace read the verses. They were the immortal lines of the poet speaking in his exile.

"Devant les trahisons et les têtes courbées
Je croiserais les bras, indigné mais serein;
Sombre fidélité pour les choses tombées,
Sois ma force et ma joie et mon pilier d'airain!

Où, tant qu'il sera là, qu'on cède ou qu'on persiste,
O France, France aimée et qu'on pleure toujours,
Je ne reverrai pas ta terre douce et triste;
Tombeau de mes aïeux et nid de mes amours;

Je ne reverrai pas ta rive qui nous tente,
France, hors le devoir, hélas! j'oublierai tout;
Parmi les épreuves je planterai ma tente:
Je resterais proscrit, voulant rester debout.

J'accepte l'âpre exil n'eût-il ni fin, ni terme;
Sans chercher à savoir et sans considérer
Si quel'un a plié qu'on aurait cru plus ferme,
Et si plusieurs s'en vont qui devraient demeurer.

Si l'on n'est plus que mille, et bien j'en suis, si même
Ils ne sont plus que cent, je brave encore Sylla;
S'il en demeure dix, je serai le dixième:
Et s'il n'en reste qu'un, je serai celui-là."

"Well, I have nothing more to say," replied Horace, closing the book. "I see we must walk our separate ways. If I am wrong, let me bear the consequences; but I am acting for the best. I have no vocation

for the life you would lead: to adopt it would therefore be hypocrisy. In a few days I shall start for Clairefontaine. My wife and my father-in-law both urge me to this course, and it would have given me strength and courage if your good wishes had accompanied me."

"My good wishes you have," exclaimed Emile, earnestly; "and my approval, too, if you are following the bent of your conscience — a man's best guide. Besides, you are my brother, and if your opinions were ten times more opposed to mine than they are, I would still wish them success for your sake."

"And what do you mean to do with your own share of the estate?" asked Horace, a little moved; "remember, half of it is yours."

"I had almost forgotten it," answered Emile, with a sigh; and he began reflecting a moment: then turning with an appealing look of affection to his brother, he faltered: "Look here, Horace: you won't think I am trying to sermonize you or put you to the blush; but don't ask me to have any thing to do with this money. You say the landed influence of Clairefontaine is what you most want: well, then, let the whole estate remain yours. And as to the revenues of that part of it which would have been mine, dispose of them as you will: I give them over to you in trust for the public good — yes, for the public good."

He laid both hands on his brother's shoulders and kissed him, impulsively, fervently.

In this way they parted; but when an hour or two later the waiter from the cookshop returned to fetch his plates away, he found the dinner standing untasted as he had laid it. Emile was sitting by the open window, his arms resting on the sill and his head buried in them.

"Don't you dine, sir?" asked the waiter, coaxingly.

Emile started, and the question had to be repeated. Then he answered absently that he had no appetite. The epilogue to which was that on reaching the cookshop the waiter observed, "That poor M. Emile does take on terribly about his father's death; I found him broken down like just now, and I'll stake my head he'd been crying."



CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ANGÉLIQUE'S CONFESSION.

CERTAINLY the most edifying priest in Paris was Father Glabre of the Reverend

Society of Jesus. He had a voice like a sweet barrel-organ, a smile that did one good to witness, and walked the road to the Kingdom of Heaven in polished leather shoes. This holy man's church was that of St. Hyacinth, and on the Sundays when he preached there was a great tail of carriages stretching outside the church door on both sides of the street, and footmen in plush hanging about the porch enough to make a goodly battalion. But Father Glabre was seen to greatest advantage on "Confession Mornings." Confession mornings were Wednesdays and Fridays. On those days Father Glabre gave ear to the sins of his flock, chided gently and bestowed absolution. It is to be supposed that the male element in the St. Hyacinth congregation were either singularly free from human error or lamentably blind to their own shortcomings, or painfully remiss in their religious duties; anyhow, no trowsered penitent was ever seen to kneel in Father Glabre's confessional and declare himself a miserable sinner. But the women made up for this. What a throng, and what devotion! What a rustling of silk dresses, what contrite rows of six-buttoned gloves clasped daintily over velvet missals, what pretty attempts to corrupt that righteous servant of the church, the beadle, in order to secure a privileged seat whence one might dart into the tribunal of repentance out of one's turn! There were so many ladies that it was a sort of point of honor between them that none should take more than five minutes over the recital of their sins. Most of them cheated and took ten minutes, and said even then that they had not half done; which used to make M. Gousset remark, that, next to the pleasure of sinning itself, there was nothing women liked better than remembering their sins and talking about them. This M. Gousset used to make other impertinent speeches. To one lady acquaintance who told him she was about to confess herself, he had been known to say: "I protest against your going and demoralizing that good man;" and to another who had just come from confession: "And how did the poor fellow bear up against it?"

The church of St. Hyacinth was in the same quarter as the Hôtel Macrobe, and one of Father Glabre's most punctual parishioners was Angélique. She was punctual in this sense, that she and her aunt had sittings close to the chancel, and might be seen in them every Sunday morning at high mass, whether the reverend father preached or not. But she did not often attend confession, and when she did, had more than enough with the regulation five minutes. The fact is, she scarcely

understood the ceremony. She had a kind of idea that those of her own sex who did not attend Father Glabre's confessional at least once in the half-year would find it disagreeable for them at some distant day of reckoning; but wherefore it should be so, why women should need this ordeal more than men, and wherefore, above all, an indispensable preliminary to salvation should consist of kneeling for ten minutes in the year in an oak box, were questions which she was content to class amongst the sublime mysteries of the holy Catholic Church, not intended to be fathomed by the faithful. One day, however, it occurred to her — as a new use for some long familiar object may strike an observer — that there might, perhaps, be something more in this practice of confession than appeared in the kneeling and avowing that one had been reading good books and found them dull, which was what Angélique's disclosures generally amounted to. Might not the priest be a friend to whom one could unburden one's heart in moments of sore difficulty, and from whom one could receive advice that one dare not ask of mundane friends or relatives? That Angélique should have arrived at this thought by her own unaided self; that it should have come to her in the light of a boon; and that she should have contemplated at once availing herself of the opportunities it revealed to her, were proofs of how lonely she must have felt her life to be, and of how great a fund of trouble must have been stored up in her simple heart since she yearned to relieve herself to any one, even to a stranger.

Yes, lonely and full of trouble, though she would have been at a loss to define what was the nature of the confession she wished to make, and what sort of solace it was she hoped to obtain. Womanlike, or rather childlike, she went no farther in her reflections than beyond this point, — that she was unhappy; and, with the touching confidence of those who suffer, believed that all save herself could prescribe for her pain, and assuage it. So, when Father Glabre preached she listened to him with the anxious attention we bestow on those in whom we think of confiding, examined his features intently, and felt her heart flutter when he looked and spoke in her direction. And when, one Sunday, he announced that during the Easter season he would be at home at stated times to hear the confessions of penitents who were unable to attend at the church hours, — or those, he might have added, whose confessions necessitated developments, — she took mental note of the days he had named, and waited for the first of them with a

trepidation that almost counted the minutes.

It was on the day of the close of the Corps Législatif session that Angélique went to Father Glabre's. She had, of course, spoken her intention to no one, and had even been compelled to use stratagem to rid herself of the Crimean Hero.

Father Glabre had not been apprised beforehand of her visit, but, on receiving the name of the Duchess of Hautbourg, hurried out with more than his usually unctuous welcome. Somehow, he seemed agitated and unduly pleased at her visit, as if it were a stroke of good luck that he had not expected, but which he had particular and private reasons for rejoicing at.

The sanctum where he led her was dim, half oratory, half study. The furniture, scanty, but rich and prelatial, attracted the eye by its appropriateness, and reposed it by its good taste. There were no books, excepting a red-leaved breviary; but, — unlooked-for thing in such a place, — an open newspaper had been thrown on a chair; and had Angélique been collected enough to make such an observation, she might have noticed that this was not a clerical journal, but a purely financial organ.

However, she was not collected enough for any thing; for now that she was alone with the priest, who was to smooth her troubles away, every thing she had thought of saying seemed to have oozed completely out of her memory. But Father Glabre was cognizant of this symptom from having often witnessed it before; and in his most dulcet, winning tones, set himself to allay the nervousness. There was a comfortable softly-cushioned fall-stool for such of the fair penitents as held strictly to the rubric of observances, and could not have been persuaded to recite their *mea-culpas* otherwise than in a posture of humiliation, kneeling on thick velvet; but Father Glabre liked an informal conversation better. He was a man of the world. He saw with pleasure Angélique drop into the arm-chair he offered her; took another for himself, not too close, nor too far from her; and, pending the moment when she should have recovered from her shyness, spoke in an easy, re-assuring way with modulated accents about nothing in particular, and more or less about every thing. It was mere child's play to this consummate ecclesiastic to draw a confession from such a penitent as Angélique. He saw that at a glance, and quietly bided his time. Mon dieu, there were ladies who gave him trouble! Certain lovely but provoking sinners were quite willing to render their confession to the holy church Catholic,

but they were determined, as it were, that the holy church Catholic should not get things too cheap. The reverend father had to wrestle with these, to cajole, to finesse, to extract the confession in unshapely fragments piecemeal; and, when at last it was all out, there would sometimes be nothing to show but a little bit of a sin that would not pay for the trouble of pulling up. An hysterical penitent, who looked as much overwhelmed as if she was fresh from committing six at least out of the seven deadly sins, had one day kept herself on her knees, and the reverend Father Glabre on tenter-hooks, for three-quarters of an hour by the onyx clock on the mantle-piece, only to avow in the end that she had eaten a ham sandwich on Ash Wednesday! Ah! all is not *couleur de rose* in the life of a confessor!

But Angélique gave none of this trouble. When Father Glabre had sufficiently laid the dust on the penitent's path by the refreshing dew of his small-talk, he began discreetly to touch upon the soothing mission of the church, in receiving secrets and giving comfort in exchange. And then—after a last self-struggle—Angélique confessed herself—said all she had to say, in a low, plaintive voice, with interjection of sighs and occasional tears; but without stopping. Women who are habitually reticent of words will speak in exceptional moments with a quiet fluency that is astonishing. Angélique unfolded the whole tale of her life; which on her lips sounded a very disappointed, unhappy story indeed. She related how she had been married; the history of Georgette's attachment for her husband; the comparative felicity of the first months of her wedded life when she thought her husband perhaps really loved her as much as he said. Then, her perplexities in her divided allegiance between husband and father; her attempts to obey the latter in prevailing upon Horace to resume his estates; her powerlessness to influence him; and finally the certainty that he no longer loved her, and that she had made his life wretched by marrying him. Horace was always kind to her, but she could see that he was weary of her. He remained less and less with her every day; and every day took long rides, she had no need to be told where. She knew it was to Meudon.

Father Glabre had nothing to do but to listen in silence. Now and then he put a short, pertinent question to help him connect all the links of the narrative, but he made no answer, until half relieved, but bruised and shivering after her confession, Angélique ceased speaking and hid her face in her handkerchief.

"You could not have come to a surer fountain of comfort than the church, dear lady," he then said in his most assuaging tones. "Your sorrows are great, but our sympathy is proportionate."

It was not Father Glabre's way to remind his fair votaries much that he was a priest. He preferred the character and language of friend; but his discourse was just enough garnished with ecclesiastical phrase to give it the extra force and prestige that were needed to carry it home. So his exhortations to Angélique were exactly what they should have been—benign, compassionate, hopeful; savoring a little of the pulpit, a great deal of the drawing-room, still more of the place where they were—the confidential retreat. As to the part of the narrative respecting the Clairefontaine intrigue, the Catholic priest could have but one opinion, which was shared by the man of the world and the brotherly adviser. It was a wife's duty to rescue her husband from all such contamination as would result from a long connection with the enemies of religion (read "Liberals"), and the Duke of Hautbourg should undoubtedly be urged to resume a position, where, properly guided (read, "by you, Madame, under my instruction"), he would render most signal services to the church. Coming to Angélique's domestic sorrows, Father Glabre trod lightly on the delicate ground; though he knew every inch of it, and had nothing to fear from its pitfalls. This was not, by a good many dozens, the first story of connubial woe he had been made to listen to. But his experience of such cases was that women confess their suspicions in order that the priest may dispel them; so that he carefully eschewed the blunder of admitting even by implication that there was any foundation for Angélique's fears. On the contrary, he strove to show that we often take alarm on slender proof, and that our doing so is a virtue since it only argues excess of love; "but," added he softly, "let us not neglect probabilities," and the probabilities on which he dilated were that the Duke of Hautbourg, being a man of taste and culture, was not likely to prefer a person in a very subordinate sphere of life, and no doubt uneducated, to the gifted and accomplished lady he had before him. There are few lines of argument more sure of success than that which consists of proving to a woman that her rival is not to be named in the same day with her; and the Rev. Father Glabre said enough to dismiss a dozen ordinary women on their way with tears dried and hearts leaping. But Angélique was not an ordinary woman.

"Ah," said she, sadly, shaking her head,

"you don't know my husband, nor Georgette Pochemolle, Father. She is more educated than I am, and her rank is not lower than what mine would have been had my father not become so rich. But I am not jealous of her. She is worthier of him than I, and how can I blame my husband because he has eyes to see it? But it would have been so much better if he had perceived this before our marriage; for, now, what am I to do? Yet it is a terrible thing for him to be joined all his life to a woman he does not like, when there is another near who might make him so happy."

Unaccustomed as he was to betray astonishment at any thing—indeed there were few things surprised him—the Rev. Father Glabre slightly opened his eyes at this; not quite sure whether he had heard aright. Angélique caught his look and guessed the meaning of it.

"Oh, yes!" continued she, with artless melancholy, "I love my husband. I did not know at first what love was; but when I came to feel happy at his being near me, and sad when he looked sad, I understood that this was love. Only I don't think it would be love if I thought of him only for myself. Sometimes, when he was not looking at me, I have watched him, and seen his face darken, and I have said to myself: 'This is because of me,' and then I have felt that I would do any thing—any thing on earth, to keep that cloud from his brow. Do you know what it is to feel this? To sit and reflect whether there is any means by which we can take away some one's suffering and add it to our own, and not to find any? For the more I looked, the more dark things seemed to me; and something like a voice in the night—yes, it was like that, the voice of something within that only speaks when one is alone, or when one lies awake and cannot sleep—kept saying to me that I was guilty for this. You see, I had only to say no when he asked me to be his wife, and he would have gone away and soon forgotten me; for he never really loved me—never felt for me as I do now for him. But I was afraid. I was afraid of my father," repeated she, with something of shuddering terror in her accent. "He desired this marriage, and though I did not understand why, then, I have begun to think lately that I could guess; and if what I suspect is true, and that the poor boy was half inveigled into the match, then I am more guilty than human words can tell, and all the sorrow that overtakes me is just. But it is not just that he should suffer because I was weak and cowardly," and she fixed her eyes upon the priest with such a deep expression of sorrow, that he stood speechless before this grief, of which

he had never yet seen an example, and which he could scarcely comprehend.

But sensibility was not a foible against which the reverend father was often obliged to pray Heaven to guard him. To be just, he must have been endowed at his birth with a larger share of this virtue than usually falls to one man, had he retained much of it after all he had heard in that room. A town doctor may be said to lose his illusions before his hair turns gray, a solicitor before his teeth have begun to loosen, but a town confessor loses his before the gloss has yet vanished from his first cassock. So it was not the fault of Father Glabre, but rather of the generation which had whispered its sins into his ear, if, after a moment's stupefaction, he should have darted a rather keen glance at the woman, who, for a moment, had thrown him off his impassiveness; and then fallen to musing. Imagine a man who has a new contrivance presented to him: knows there is a catch in it, and wants to discover what that catch is; and you will have before you the Reverend Father Glabre attempting to divine what could be at the bottom of the Duchess of Hautbourg's confession, and feeling baffled.

Seeing him looking at her with benevolence—for whatever might be brewing within the reverend father's head, his countenance remained unalterably benevolent—Angélique murmured mournfully: "It has done me good, father, to confide all this to you, for I have no one at home to whom I could speak. There is my aunt, but I should only sadden her, and she could do nothing for me; and of course this is not a matter for my cousin's ears."

"Your cousin is married?" asked Father Glabre.

"It is not a lady," said Angélique. "He is staying with us until he rejoins his regiment. He is in the Carbineers."

"Oh!" replied Father Glabre; and this "Oh!" as it was uttered by him was a thing to hear. The number of cousins in the Carbineers whom the reverend father had met lurking in the side-shifts of domestic dramas was one of the curious facts of his experience. Nevertheless, he abstained from embracing hasty conclusions, and it was well that he did so, for a few more questions answered with the naivest candor convinced him that, whether he felt disposed to own it or no, he had come this day upon a—to him—new type of Parisian woman—one who, amidst the corruptions of the Babel City, and, though placed in circumstances where every thing conspired to ensnare her, had kept the guileless innocence of a child. Then something akin to pity took possession of this priest. It was the

feeling of a hard soldier who finds, wandering, in the midst of a raging battle, a young and defenceless woman. The sceptical Jesuit felt tempted to exclaim: "What are you doing amongst us, my poor child? what hope is there for you in a world like ours?" And with a perceptible shrug he reflected to himself: "Here is a fair creature who has more love for her husband than he deserves. But how will it end? A part of this affection, which he disdains, she will one day transfer to the Carbineer. *Eheu me!* what an oft-told fable is this!"

But aloud he said, with most considerate gentleness: "Dear lady, there is nothing in all you have related from which I can gather that the slightest particle of blame attaches to you. Your own conduct has been exempt from reproach; and let me persist in hoping that such is also the case with the Duke of Hautbourg. But were it otherwise I would remind you, less as a priest than as a man who has seen much and had many opportunities of marking the courses of human weakness, that illicit passions never last long, and that the man whose affections stray for a while from his own hearth, soon returns to it contrite, with a new craving for that peace which can only be found in domestic life. It is Heaven's will that it should be so. The satiety that cloy irregular appetites is a visible manifestation of the protection which Heaven accords to the holy institution of matrimony. Dear lady, trust in this to the healing grace of time. Your husband's heart will surely be yours again, and the sooner if you persevere in the wise and feeling course you have adopted of not letting it be seen that you have suspected him. This is but a passing trial: 'Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.'"

He gave her absolution *pro forma*, pushing a hassock for her to kneel on during the rite; but she knelt humbly on the floor, and in accepting the assistance of his arm to rise when it was over, thanked him in a meek feeble voice for his forbearance in listening to her. He replied with a few more cheering and politic counsels, and this put an end to the clerical portion of the interview. The priest then gave way to the man of the world, or rather, in this case, to the man of business; for it was then that stood revealed the signification of the sudden look of gladness that had illumined the reverend Father's features at the sight of Angélique, and also the secret of the financial organ displayed on a chair. As he conducted Angélique out of the oratory, her black glove lightly resting on his sleeve, like a small bird, the eloquent Jesuit said, not without some anxiety in his voice: "Madame la Duchesse, have you heard

that the *Crédit Parisien* is ailing in any way?"

"No," answered Angélique, surprised but uninterested, for the *Crédit Parisien* and its concerns were as so much Sanscrit to her.

"You relieve me," exclaimed the Rev. Father, who looked in truth relieved. "There were some disquieting rumors afloat, but your denial of course shows me they were unfounded. If you will permit me," said he, stopping, and running back to fetch the paper—"you will see *Madame la Duchesse*"—and he pointed to the column headed "*BOURSE*"—"the money article adopts a certain tone of alarm. It says (excuse me for reading):—'There was a new fall on *Crédit Parisien* securities this day. The closing price of the shares was one thousand two hundred and thirty francs, showing a decrease of thirty francs on yesterday's quotations, and of three hundred and twenty francs as compared with the quotations of this day a month ago.' Not that I personally have any reason to feel uneasy at this," added the Father, with a deprecating little smile; "but I have been given to understand that sundry members of the church—some religious corporations I believe—have invested a part of their small means in the company which your eminent father governs so ably, and it was on their behalf that I experienced a little uneasiness."

Translated into French this speech meant, that the Rev. Father Glabre being not unprovided with this world's goods, and entertaining that same affection for ten per cent as his contemporaries, had been touched by the prevailing epidemic, and bought some *Crédit Parisien* shares at one thousand four hundred francs. Whence a certain degree of stupefaction, followed by doubt and distracting meditations, when these shares, after rising to one thousand five hundred and fifty francs, had suddenly begun to fall. Should he sell out at the unpleasant, but comparatively small loss of one hundred and seventy francs per share, so as to avoid a greater sacrifice by and by; or was this merely a temporary depression from which the company would recover in a week or two? This is what he would have liked to learn of the eminent M. Macrobe's daughter, and it is this that had caused him to look upon her visit as a truly providential event.

Angélique glanced ruefully at the shareholder, much as a girl of the Malay Archipelago might in trying to decipher a music-scroll.

"I have not heard that there was any thing wrong," said she. "My father has not told me any thing. But I will ask him, if you like."

"Oh, pray do not take that trouble!" an-

answered Father Glabre, smirking unctuously. "Only if Madame la Duchesse can gather *indirectly*" (a slight stress on this word) "from M. Macrobe what the state of the case really is, perhaps she will kindly remember that the servants of the Church resemble Lazarus more than Dives, and give me such information as may enable me to save them in time from losing their little all."

"Oh, certainly!" said Angélique, with feeling, and this reminded her that she had in her pocket a purse filled with money that she never wanted, and which generally mulcted in instalments to beggars. She fumbled for it furtively and extracted a thousand-franc note which she pressed into the father's hand at parting: "For the poor of your parish, Father," she murmured.

But riding homewards she did not feel as though her confession had given her the relief she had sought. The palliation to her suffering had been only temporary. Whilst Father Glabre spoke, she had seen a faint ray of sunshine gleaming through the clouds; but, now, the horizon on which her mind's eyes were fixed seemed as colorless, as bereft of hope, as ever. It seemed even vaguely menacing. For,—as in moments when the atmosphere is heavy,—an oppressive sensation stole over her spirit, an undefined presentiment of events near at hand, which would concern her, towards which she was slowly drifting, and which loomed ahead of her like reefs in the hazy night of the future.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A PANIC.

THE Reverend Vicar of St. Hyacinth's had not exaggerated matters in talking of the disquieting rumors that were bruited about the *Crédit Parisien*. The rumors were very disquieting indeed to those who had money in that enterprise; and amongst these, to our friend, the Prince of Arcola.

Seated at his breakfast-table in travelling attire, with a British-looking teapot and a still more British-looking muffin before him, he read "The Times" newspaper, and thus conversed with Bateson, who, railway-tables in hand, was taking a survey of the trains that left for Hautbourg that day:—

"Bateson, have you not shares in the *Crédit Parisien*?"

"Yes, my lord."

"And it is I who did counsel you to buy

them. How long ago was that, do you remember?"

"Two years ago, my lord."

"And at how much the shares were they?"

"I bought ten shares, my lord," responded the punctilious Bateson, "at seven hundred and eighty-five francs each."

The Prince drew out his pencil-case, scrawled a multiplication sum on the margin of his "Times," and said, half-apologetically:—"Bateson, I have much fear that this company is not what I thought. They have made to run noises on its account, and if these noises be true the shareholders will lose their money."

Bateson stood calmly motionless. The idea that a French company, trading in a French land, could presume to make him, Bateson, a British subject, lose his money, was a thing slow to strike him as being within the range of possibilities. There are forms of audacity which it requires an effort to realize. At length he asked, with imperturbable composure: "Then the company is a swindle, my lord?" And one could divine the unspoken corollary: "In which case, I shall feel it my duty, on public grounds, to lodge a complaint against them at Bow Street."

"Well, Bateson, one rarely knows in these misadventures whom to blame," said the Prince with a patient shrug. "What I wanted to say is, that you must not lose by my advice. You should sell your shares now; but, as we are going out of town to-day, perhaps it would be difficult to see your broker in time. Suppose, then, you pass them to me. I will take them at the day before yesterday's quotations, as given here in 'The Times,'—1,275 francs."

"And yourself, my lord?"

"Oh! do not be in pain for me, I will sell yours along with mine. But you shall have what they call a clause of redemption, Bateson; that is in the case where the shares should come to rise again, I will return them to you for what I gave. That shall be only fair."

The mind of Bateson took in the business-like aspects of this operation, and discovered that the proposal was advantageous, not to say uncommonly handsome, for which ever way the wind veered, he, Bateson, a British subject, would be the gainer.

"I am infinitely obliged to you, my lord," he said.

"Then, Bateson, it is an affair concluded. If you will give me my cheque-book, which is on that table, I will sign you a draft for the sum, twelve thousand seven hundred and fifty francs, or five hundred and ten pounds sterling, in your currency."

Which was done. Then the Prince be-

gan a second sum in pencil for his own particular behoof, and by multiplying five hundred and fifty francs (money paid for his own shares) by eight thousand (number of shares bought) arrived at the pleasant conclusion that if the *Crédit Parisien* were to founder, he should be four million four hundred thousand francs, or one hundred and seventy-six thousand pounds sterling, out of pocket. But this was not all. There were one or two other persons besides Bateson whom the Prince had advised in all good faith to invest their savings in the *Crédit Parisien*; and that he was morally bound not only to guarantee these people from loss, but also to prevent them from selling to others, shares which he now knew to be worthless, seemed to him a fact as incontrovertible as noonday. So Bateson was despatched below to make financial inquiries of, and enter into transfer negotiations with, the coachman, major-domo, and chef-de-cuisine, three important functionaries who lived in clover under the princely roof, and by dint of occult perquisites, accumulated salaries which allowed them to look down upon captains of the line, country vicars, and judges of first instance, as meanly paid officials. And the upshot of Mr. Bateson's embassy was, that before another half-hour had sped, three more cheques on the bank of MM. Lecoq, Roderheim and Macrobe found their way from the breakfast-room to the commons.

Thereupon, the Prince, rid of a double load — load of uneasiness, and load of money — finished breakfasting, and endeavored, with as much coolness as the circumstances admitted, to foresee what would become of him if he were ever ruined. He should have to renounce his hopes of winning the English Derby, that was clear; but he might have to renounce many other things besides that. Perhaps this political life — which he was now about to embrace for the sake of punishing a rival — he might be compelled to cleave to from necessity.

It would be something to have the deputy's salary of 500*l.* on which to fall back; and then the deputyships led to other things — senatorships, ambassadorships, Ministerial portfolios. He mentally followed himself, pursuing the steep by-paths, the tortuous labyrinths, the break-neck highways that conduct one to places such as that which M. Gribaud occupied; and, at the prospect, he winced a little, for it was not one that consorted with his ideal of an agreeable life's journey. In which predicament of mind he betook himself to reading his letters, of which a goodly heap had been brought in contemporaneously with "The Times." There was one he had been

expecting from M. Gribaud's secretary. Some days before, alarmed at the congratulations of friends, who had been assuring him that the Government was going to have the peasantry round Hautbourg marched the poll in imposing columns, like herds of horned cattle, he had written to request that no support of that kind might be afforded him, but that he might be allowed to fight out the battle with his adversary on equal terms — a fair field, and no favor. In answer to this M. Gribaud's secretary wrote: —

"MONSIEUR LE PRINCE, — I am directed by M. Gribaud to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, and to say that Government will, at your desire, abstain from taking any active part in the contest between yourself and M. le Duc de Hautbourg. At the same time, his Excellency requests me to state that it cannot be expected, neither would it be desirable, that the authorities should conceal their very sincere wishes for your success.

"I have the honor to remain,

"Monsieur le Prince,

"Your most obedient humble servant,
"C. DE BEAUFEUILLET."

The Prince had not restored this letter to its envelope before Bateson re-appeared to say that M. Macrobe had called. Was his lordship at home?

The hour was early, but his lordship *was* at home. He had no reason to shirk seeing the financier, who was his friend as well as his banker, for conventionally, at least, the coolness with Horace was not supposed to cause any estrangement from Horace's father-in-law. Moreover, the rumors that were busy with the good name of the *Crédit Parisien* rendered the Prince not unnaturally anxious to sound the respected chairman as to what might definitely happen to the mammoth enterprise, erst so lusty. He was not quite naïve enough to expect that M. Macrobe would confess it if the reports were true; but he fancied he should have sagacity enough to discern, by the financier's manner, whether there were any real danger under the surface. As for M. Macrobe, the secret of his visit to the Prince might have been found in a confidential note from M. Louchard, which he carried in the breast-pocket of his coat. Here was that note: —

* "SIR, — The big goose has proved tough;

* "SIR, — The Prefect has proved incorruptible; no amount of bribing will buy him. Some of the minor officials are open to offers, but they can be of but little use to us without the Prefect. My most trusted agent has canvassed the borough electors, and those in the country districts. He is not dis-

amount of boiling will sodden him. Some of the goslings are tender enough, but they will not make a dish without the goose. My farm bailiff has examined the flocks in the sty, and those in the meadow. He is not dissatisfied with the former, but gives a poor account of the latter. The flocks will cut up tender, if seasoned with the patent sauce; otherwise I fear they will be uneatable. This is the story with the rest of the fowls. The sauce, the sauce! else our friend will never be able to digest his dinner!

"ROBERT VINCENT.

"P. S.—I put the tenderest, plumpest, and handsomest of our chickens into the same pot as the goose. It was of no use. That bird must have been furiously strong on the wing. His weight is enormous."

Coupled with the very serious complexion which the affairs of the *Crédit Parisien* were assuming, and with this circumstance, that, on the preceding day — being that on which the *Corps Législatif* had been dissolved — M. Macrobe had not seen his son-in-law, and was consequently in ignorance of the resolution to which he had finally come, this note of M. Louchard's was a most portentous warning. The financier was beginning to feel that the odds were turning against him. He had yet two cards to play, however, and the first of these was to try and effect a reconciliation between Horace and the Prince, in order that the latter might be induced to retire. He did not despair of this chance.

The two men being mutually interested in keeping on good terms with each other, shook hands with tolerable cordiality; and M. Macrobe at once took the bull by the horns, by saying cheerily: "In travelling garb I see, mon Prince. Bound for Hautbourg?"

"Yes, saddled for the road," smiled the Prince. "The session only closed yesterday, and I believe it is a point of etiquette not to begin canvassing until the dissolution, in order that all the candidates may have an equal start."

"Good practice, if well observed," returned the financier, as cheerily as before, "but it isn't. To continue the racing

metaphor, your prefect is putting all his nags into training, and spiking the course for our colt."

"I have heard that he has been showing too much zeal and am sorry for it. See, I wrote to the Government on the very subject, and here is their answer" (he handed the secretary's letter). "I have no wish to win any victory, but such as I may be proud of."

"But come, why do you want a victory at all?" exclaimed M. Macrobe, sinking into an arm-chair, and looking coaxingly into the Prince's face. "Don't let us have any mystery about this, mon Prince. I know why you have quarrelled with my son-in-law. It is about that little bit of a girl, Georgette Pochemolle. But frankly, is it worth the while of two gentlemen to fall out about such a trifle?"

"It is no trifle in my eyes when a friend of mine misconducts himself," answered the Prince dryly. "Since our quarrel is no secret to you, M. Macrobe, you must be aware of what occasioned it. On the eve of proposing to Mdlle. Pochemolle, I appealed to the Duke of Hautbourg, with the utmost confidence, as to a brother, to know whether there had ever been any thing between him and the woman I wished to make my wife; and in return he deceived me. If the consequence of this behavior had been only to entail upon me the cruel humiliation of the refusal which followed, I should say nothing. But my proposal revived painful memories in Mdlle. Georgette's mind; it distressed her; and I have a right to resent that sorrow which I was the unwilling means of inflicting upon a lady."

"Your proposal distressing to Mdlle. Georgette! that I will swear it was not," replied the financier with a coarse laugh. "As to the other points, mon Prince, I had always imagined that where a lady's honor was involved, gentlemen were expected to be silent — nay, in some cases even to perjure themselves. You would not have had the Duke of Hautbourg blight a poor girl's reputation by too candid avowals."

"I would not have had a Duke of Hautbourg blight a poor girl's happiness by making sport of her affections," answered the Prince, excitedly.

"Well, but, let us be reasonable, mon Prince," said the financier; "when Horace Gerold seduced this shop-girl, he could not foresee that she would one day be honored with your love."

"Seduced her!" and the Prince looked at Prosper Macrobe with an expression in which sudden amazement was largely blended with indignation. "What do you mean by that, Monsieur Macrobe?"

lashed with the former, but gives a poor account of the latter. The clergy will be on our side, if the Duke of Hautbourg goes to his estates; otherwise there is no reliance to be placed on them. This is the story with the rest of the constituency. Let the Duke return to Clairefontaine, or he will never win his election.

"MOISE LOUCHARD.

"P. S.—I set the wildest, most influential, and prettiest of the ladies in our pay to cajole the Prefect. It was of no use. He must have been promised promotion in the event of his defeating the Duke. He is working the screw with tremendous vigor."

"Well, made her his mistress, if you like the euphemism better," answered the financier, not less surprised. "You surely hadn't any illusions on this head?"

"Good heavens!" groaned the Prince, turning ghastly pale.

The financier had not suspected that the Prince could be unaware of the *liaison* between Horace and Georgette. Indeed, he fancied that the quarrel had been mainly caused by the Prince's intimate knowledge of what he — M. Macrobe — had only ascertained latterly. On beholding the Prince's woe-struck attitude he was for an instant disconcerted; but next moment the reflection occurred that here was an opportunity of terminating at a stroke the difference between the antagonists by proving to the Prince that Georgette was not worthy of the interest of an honest man.

"Why, don't you know?" said he, with affected concern. "Georgette Pochemolle was the mistress of my son-in-law long before his marriage, and — it is a cruel thing for me to acknowledge, but I do so to you — I have reason to fear that she is so still. I obtained evidence of this wretched fact but a few days ago; and I need not tell you what a blow it was to me. But least said soonest mended in such cases. I should only compromise my daughter's domestic peace by interfering. There is nothing for it but to let these passions wear themselves out."

The Prince was walking distractedly up and down.

"And to think I had set up this girl on a shrine in my heart," exclaimed he, in a bitter voice. "I believed in her — oh, what actresses women are! But," and he turned almost fiercely on M. Macrobe, "this does not alter my opinion as to your son-in-law's behavior, for even this fallen girl is proved to have acted more honorable than he. He would have suffered me, his friend, to give my hand to a courtesan, to his leman, and have polluted my hearth by and by by remaining my wife's paramour; but it was the courtesan who had too much delicacy for this arrangement!"

"Softly, sir," cried the financier, nettled; "I am sure my son-in-law had no such base design as that. He would have respected your hearth."

"Why should he have respected mine since he does not respect his own?" exclaimed the Prince, laughing contemptuously. "And is it you who defend him?" added he, surprise mingling with his disdain. "Why, of what clay can he be moulded, this man who not a year after his marriage, keeps a mistress whom he has seduced, and makes so little secret of the fact that his father-in-law, and perhaps his wife, are aware of it! A man so reckless of his good reputation, so

regardless of the decencies which even professed libertines observe, can have no soul worth the name. God forgive me, I am no Puritan, but I pity the poor lady who has wedded her lot to his; and you, sir, whom this marriage has made the relative of so degenerate a nobleman. As to wishing to win a victory over him, I desire to bar him out of the Legislature, as I would black-ball him at a club."

"I beg you to remark, *mon Prince*," interposed the financier, choler rising to his gimlet eyes, "that if I thought my son-in-law's conduct justified any of the stringent expressions which you use, I should not have delayed even a day in interfering. But if I have deemed it wise to make allowances for a young man enthralled by a clever and designing girl, and perhaps chained to her by that very fear of scandal which you accuse him of braving — for you certainly know by what manner of threats these women are accustomed to retain their victims by their side — I think, the least which a stranger can do is to imitate me. After all, the matter concerns me more than anybody else."

"Well, so it does," replied the Prince, wincing, but in a quiet voice; for after pacing in agitation on the hearth-rug during a moment or two, he was recollecting that M. Macrobe, as his visitor, had a claim to be spoken to undemonstratively. He resumed his seat, penned up his feelings with an effort, as a man might bottle generous, effervescing wine, and putting on a ghastly semblance of cheerfulness, said: "*Minora canamus*. I was just brooding when you came in over the chances of my having to adopt politics as a trade, should the company in which both our fortunes are cast meet with the fate that is being predicted for it."

"The *Crédit Parisien* is as safe as the Bank of France," said M. Macrobe, hastily, but still scowling. "Have you all your shares still?" and his tone as well as his glance quickened as he asked this question.

"All," answered the Prince, with some dolefulness. "A ten-million francs' worth according to present quotations, though I had them for less than half that, as I believe you know; to-morrow, however, they may be worth less than I gave, and next year nothing at all if this fall continues."

"If you apprehend that, what is to prevent your realizing to-day?" retorted M. Macrobe, sharply.

"Just this," said the Prince, and this time it was his eyes that wore the searching expression. "I was warned the other day by somebody whose name I am not free to mention, but whose position gave

almost oracular weight to his words" (M. Macrobe seemed to prick up his ears), "that the *Crédit Parisien* was tottering. If I were to sell my shares I should be obliged to impart this bit of information to the man who bought them; and naturally he would, then, refuse to buy. Thus until I get sound proof that the *Crédit Parisien* is not tottering, my shares are tied to my hands."

M. Macrobe looked the Prince through and through: "And you would sacrifice ten million francs to this scruple?" said he.

"Please to fancy a moment that instead of so many thousand shares I possessed a like number of sardine boxes," answered the Prince, with good-natured calmness: "and that these boxes, all shining externally, were full within of rancid oil and uneatable fish. It would scarcely be an honest transaction, I think, to go and sell these receptacles on the market as full of good sardines?" and he arched his eyebrows with an air of inquiring remonstrance.

A ray as that of a dark lantern gleamed into the dark cavern where M. Macrobe was groping, and seemed to show him a way out.

"But what if I bought your shares?" he asked.

"That would be another affair," replied the Prince with pardonable alacrity. "You are the chairman of this company, and know all its secrets. If you buy, it will be with your eyes open to the risks you run, and I shall be your obliged servant."

"Then prove it," exclaimed M. Macrobe, deluded by his own agitation into attaching an earnest sense to these conventional words. "Yes, Prince, I have no dearer wish than to see you and my son-in-law reconciled. Let us put an end to this unhappy difference"—

"Oh! pardon me," interrupted the Prince, coloring, and drawing himself up with his grandest air, "this sounds like a bribe." And he added in a significant tone, to warn his interlocutor from venturing twice on the same ground: "Let us talk of something else."

But they did not talk of something else, for, baffled and raging, M. Macrobe fled the *Hôtel d'Arcole*, leaving his heavy malison on it from roof to basement. It would have been better for him had he then proceeded quietly to his own house, and there seen Horace, who was waiting at home on purpose to tell him of the resolution he had formed with respect to *Clairefontaine*. This would at once have cleared off the clouds from his mind and set his noble soul at rest. But instead of that he drove to

the offices of the *Crédit Parisien*, and thus came in for a day of extremely unpleasant emotions.

The offices of the *Crédit Parisien* were of course situated in a palatial edifice. With the same spirit of generosity as had led the promoters of the company at the outset of affairs to vote themselves a handsome salary apiece, a commission had been given to an eminent architect to build a mansion regardless of expense—out of the shareholders' money. Humble stone was too poor to carry out the elaborate designs that were projected. The *Crédit Parisien* must needs be treated to marble and porphyry, granite and gilt bronze, also to statues of Commerce, Industry, and Finance, very expensive and slightly clad, beaming down on the public from sculptured frontal. And it may be accepted as one of the characteristic symptoms of the shareholdering mind, that there was not one of the shareholders who passed by this sculptured frontal and scanned its semi-nude deities, and not one who strode through its porphyry portico and noted the fretted *vermicelli* work thereon, but felt the richer for these utterly unseemly luxuries that had been distrained out of his pocket. Nay, there is ground for supposing that had the board economized at starting the two or three million francs it had wasted in building itself a house four times larger that it wanted, the shareholder, mind would have thought meanly of that board, and have complained of the lack of enterprise discernible in its undertakings. O shareholder, shareholder, my friend, and thou, tax-payer, his brother, what flats on earth so flat as ye!

Often had the well-pleased chairman seen the street in which his offices stood thronged with beatific physiognomies serene with the pocketing of fifteen per cent dividends. Pretty pink faces peeping out of broughams, and stopping him as he hurried by, crying: "O dear M. Macrobe! do come here and tell me what I am to do. See these papers; I gave seven hundred francs for them, and they are now worth fifteen hundred. If I were to sell them, you would let me have some more for seven hundred, wouldn't you?" Sleek citizens with round paunches greeting him bareheaded: "This is better than investing in three per cent *rentes*, monsieur." Playful co-promoters digging him in the ribs, and chuckling: "The pot boils, Macrobe, eh? the pot boils." But this morning it was another story. There were plenty of broughams and no lack of greetings as he descended from his own conveyance: but what greetings! Small gloved hands, and rough ungloved ones, griping him firmly by the

coat-tails; blanched feminine features, and haggard masculine ones pressing distractingly around him; anguished *soprano* voices and hoarse *braves* calling upon him wildly for explanations: "What are these rumors, M. Macrobe?" "Is there any truth in this report?" "Why are the shares falling in this way?" "Have you seen that article in the 'Constitutionnel'?" Unceremoniously shaking off these assailants like a pack of yelping curs, the chairman shouted to them: "There's nothing the matter at all. Hold to your shares or you'll be throwing coined gold out of the window," and darted up stairs. In the board-room most of the directors were assembled, a gloomy conclave; nor were they cheered by M. Macrobe's protestations: "This is nothing but a cabal got up by Gribaud, with whom I am at loggerheads." All eyes seemed to say: "Why the devil did you fall to loggerheads with Gribaud?" And the evident impression was that the chairman's speech was tantamount to what a captain's would be who were to sing out to his crew during a gale: "This is nothing. I am only at loggerheads with the north wind. It will be over presently." Yes, indeed, it might be over presently, when the north wind had worked his will, but then where would the good ship *Crédit Parisien* be? In the midst of grievous cogitations on this point, and tart debates on what had best be done, and what ought to be left undone, a clerk hurried in breathless, and said: "M. Macrobe, there is a panic at the Bourse. Shares have opened with a fall of 150 francs. If you could go there it might appease the public; but it should be done at once, for they have gone mad."

How do panics occur? Like storms, their course may be prognosticated by the vigilant, but upon the vulgar they come all of a heap, unawares. From the day when the formidable M. Gribaud had begun to blow Boreas-like upon it, the *Crédit Parisien* had ridden in troubled waters, first encountering small ripples, then little waves; and now these waves were becoming crested, were gathering ominously in strength and height, and beyond, long lines of surf, and rolling mountains of thundering sea, were breaking into sight. The small ripples were the influential shareholders, who had been set into motion by M. Gribaud himself; the little waves, the friends of these shareholders who had caught the alarm second-hand; the large waves were the great public who had got wind of coming evil by seeing the richer shareholders moving. It had taken about a month for the rumors to filter down from the topmost strata of shareholders to the undermost. But the final im-

petus to the panic, the last drop, as it were, that caused the cup to overflow, had been furnished by the closing of the *Corps Législatif* session. This being the signal for everybody to desert Paris and depart into the country, all who, possessing shares, had heard any adverse reports against the company, hastened to sell out before leaving town. Hence repeated falls several days in succession, and hence also the unavoidable consequence that the great herd of small shareholders being scared by these falls, it should have been a case of *turba ruil* or *ruunt* on the day following the dissolution. We beg here to notice another peculiarity in the shareholding idiosyncrasy. Your panic-stricken shareholder does not cloak his feelings under a decent garb of exterior nonchalance. He bolts out into the highway with his shares in his hands and his hair on end, as who should say a costermonger endeavoring to sell his fruit with this cry: "Who'll buy! Who'll buy? Rotten apples! Rotten apples!"

In the Bourse, a dozen hundred of these shareholders with their nearest kinsfolk and dependents, making up an infuriated swarm of some two thousand black hats, were bellowing like ten herds of agonized buffaloes giving tongue in concert. In the gallery overlooking the stone-paved Exchange and running all round it, frantic members of the gentler sex — no longer gentle at this moment — shrieked and wept and gesticulated to attract the attention of their stock-brokers below — in defiance of the by-law which enjoins that women visiting the Bourse should be seen and not heard, and to this end excludes them from the body of the hall. But who cares in such moments for by-laws? Maybe there is a by-law forbidding individuals to rush upon a broker twelve and twenty together, to seize him, hustle him, rend his heart and eke his garments, and yelp orders to sell into his ears under threats of personal violence? Maybe there is another by-law formally interdicting one man from ramming his fist into his neighbor's eye, under pretext that the neighbor having selfishly cornered a broker wants to keep him all to himself? And maybe a third by-law lays a total ban on the hurling of one's hat at a distant broker's physiognomy as an expedient for making him look your way? But if so nobody paid any heed to these regulations, nor, indeed, to any others which might be adorning the notice-board. Everybody was thinking about himself, howling, pushing, fighting, and perspiring in his own interests — and what a dignified animal man looks under these auspicious circumstances! Shouts of "*Crédit Parisiens* at ten fifty!" "Ten forty-five!" "Ten twenty, then;

who'll take at ten twenty?" flew upwards like sky-rockets.—"They say Macrobe has bolted!"—"Bon Dieu! I always knew it would happen; and to think I bought only a month ago at fifteen seventy!"—"Sacré boudet, will you let me pass?"—"Is it me you are addressing?"—"Yes, you; do you think I am going to stand waiting here all day-until you've done jabbering?"—"Take that, you unwhipped cur. Piff. Paff."—"Sacré nom d'un chien! Paff. Piff."—"Hullo, there's a fight down there."—"Monsieur, you must give up your umbrella at the door" (this from a policeman).—"Damn my umbrella, sir!"—"Madame, up stairs is the way for ladies."—"Monsieur, I don't care for the rules, I must see my broker, and I shall."—"Policeman impedes madame, who screams, slaps his face, and sheds tears."—"Crédit Parisien, nine fifty!"—"Bah! I wouldn't take it at eight, nor at seven!"—"Nine twenty!"—"Nine ten!"—"Nine! Crédit Parisien, nine hundred!"—"Good God! do you hear that? It's down to nine hundred!"—"Just heavens! I am father of a family, and invested all my life's savings in it when the shares were at fourteen hundred!—Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!" (moans, yells, and tears his hair out in bunches).—"Crédit Parisien at eight seventy!"—"Eight fifty-five!"—"Eight hundred!" (wildest uproar.)

At this moment somebody near the door rushed in with eyeballs starting and bawled: "Here is Macrobe, AND HE IS COMING IN!"

"Macrobe! Macrobe!" thundered two thousand voices, and the Chairman was soon visible, hot, dishevelled, panting, struggling, being mobbed along like a deliverer entering a besieged city, or like a brigand being lynched.

But now the uproar was raised to its highest pitch by a conflict of opinions, between bears and bulls, the former gentlemen being well satisfied at the depression of stocks, and in no way anxious to see them rise again; the latter being just of the other way of thinking, and shouting lustily to M. Macrobe to make a speech. The scene that followed was hell let loose. Charenton in its cups, or the Zoological Gardens emptied on to the Boulevards des Italiens. Many a noble silk hat that had weathered gales and showers was doomed that day to an untimely end. Many a glossy coat, joy of its owner and object of envy to the tattered, was reft of its two skirts and converted into a mark for opprobrium and jesting; many a cambric shirt-front, rest to the eye of the beholder, was lacerated beyond the remedying of needle-craft. But, at last, the bulls, by reason of the number of their allies,

proving victorious, M. Macrobe was hoisted on to the table that stood within the iron pen railed off for the brokers' use; and after the bears, most of them with noses punched and cravats twisted awry by kindly efforts made to strangle them, had bawled themselves hoarse during seventeen minutes and a half by the big clock in the gallery, M. Macrobe contrived to obtain a hearing. He had stood firm during the tempest, like Napoleon on his rock in the well-known picture "St. Helena." His coat was buttoned up to his throat, one of his hands thrust into the breast of it, the other behind his back holding his hat; his pointed face and weas'ly eyes contemplated the multitude with no more expression than a steel mask might. But when he uttered his short harangue he did so with his might; and never was speech better appreciated. After all, the shareholding intellect desired nothing better than to be convinced, to believe and to go on trusting to any unlimited extent which its chairman might require. The words of the financier were therefore picked up and swallowed like bread-crumbs by famished poultry. When he concluded he was tumultuously cheered; and the effect of his consoling assurances became at once apparent in a cessation of the panic and a rise of the stocks.

But for all that the Crédit Parisien had received a rough shaking, and none knew it better than the chairman. Credit in finance is like the bloom on a plum—only touch it with the finger and that is the last of it. When M. Macrobe returned home late that afternoon he could almost have counted the number of days which must form the utmost span of the company's life, if nothing occurred to bring a turn in the tide. On the table in his study he found a new letter from M. Louchard.

This one was not couched in figurative style, being a comparatively harmless communication—at least so M. Louchard opined:—

"(Private and confidential.)

"SIR,—M. le Duc de Hautbourg has been followed and it seems that he has been in the habit of going to Meudon to see Mademoiselle Georgette Pochemolle every morning for this past fortnight. He went there yesterday early, breakfasted at the restaurant with mistress's brother, and returned again in the evening. He then admitted himself with a latch-key into the grounds and remained there more than two hours. His visits are matters of public notoriety at Meudon.

"I have the honor to remain, sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"MOÏSE LOUCHARD."

M. Macrobe refolded this letter, and his grasp tightened over it.

"This is my last card," said he, "my last; and I must play it."

He went to the drawing-room, expecting to find his daughter there, and intending to ask her whether Horace had left word at what time he should be home that day. But Horace himself was in the room; and M. Macrobe perceived at a glance that Angélique, who was seated near him, looked happier than he had seen her for many weeks past. Horace rose, and, taking his wife's hand playfully, led her towards her father.

"I think, sir," said he, "Angélique has something to communicate to you."

And Angélique said with glistening eyes: "Papa, Horace has just been writing to his agent to prepare Clairefontaine Castle for us. We are going to live there for the future."

M. Macrobe by a master effort brought his features under control, so as to reveal little or nothing of what he inwardly felt; and he threw himself on to the sofa. But the effort must indeed have been a strong one, for he remained several moments without speaking, and during that pause the letter he was holding dropped unnoticed from his hand and fell among the sofa-cushions.

CHAPTER XL.

LOVE'S CALVARIES.

As M. Louchard accurately wrote, Horace had returned in the evening and let himself with a latch-key into M. Pochemolle's grounds, which grounds consisted of a garden about half an acre in extent, and embellished at one of its extremities with a belvidere, commanding an inspiring view of not less than half a mile of country. Knowing the indomitable passion of newly-retired tradesfolk for out-door walks on a week-day (such having been forbidden-fruit to them during their commercial existence), he had calculated that M. and Mme. Pochemolle might perhaps be in the habit of going out visiting neighbors, and sometimes leaving Georgette — less enthusiastic about this pastime — at home. It was the season of the year when the days are just lengthening sufficiently to admit of after-dinner outings. Accordingly, he had glided into the garden, after first reconnoitring over the hedge to see that the coast was clear; and, under cover of a propitious laurel-grove, had crept to the belvidere and there ensconced himself, waiting for events. Setting aside the

morality of the matter, this was a foolish thing to do; for a man who introduces himself by stealth into a garden runs the risk of being collared at a turning by a gardener, or waylaid by an unexpected watchdog, or descried from a top bedroom window by a housemaid, and set down for one vulgariously intent — in which last case the usual way is noiselessly to apprise the police, who march upon one strategically, and drag one out of concealment triumphantly and by the scruff of the neck. But when did lovers ever hesitate to do a foolish thing?

Horace, however, earned no recompense for his adventurousness. M. and Mme. Pochemolle did, indeed, go out whilst he was watching; but Georgette remained in doors, and did not come out into the garden. Horace had not quite enough effrontery to enter into a dwelling-house with a purloined latch-key, or it may be that he was restrained by ignoring in what part of the house Georgette might be. Anyhow, after two hours' weary waiting, the draper and his wife having meanwhile returned, he withdrew.

But withdrew only to come another time. He was at his post again on the next night, and again on the next, and so on three or four nights a week for well nigh a month. Owing to his recent bereavement, he could not tell Angélique after dinner that he was going into society or to the opera. He was reduced to simulating a desire for a stroll, or an appointment at his club; and such is the proneness of marital nature to believe in its own sagacity, that he rather congratulated himself on the specious pretexts which he invented every night to rout suspicion. If men would but devote to worthy ends one-half the ingenuity they bestow on evil, what a change we might live to see on the world's surface! After the fifth night of bootless watching, Horace's passion being increased rather than diminished by the material obstacles it encountered, he resolved that, come what might, on a certain night at the end of the third week, he would see and speak to Georgette. He was mainly driven to this resolution by the fact that the Monday of the fourth week was the day on which he had arranged to start for Clairefontaine, so that, unless he saw Georgette now, he might not have the opportunity again for some time.

Dinner over, he hinted at a headache, to which Angélique assented with a pious falsehood, saying he looked a little unwell, and recommending fresh air. M. Macrobe, who, now that all his own wishes were being crowned, would not have grudged pearls to strew on his son-in-law's path, followed in the same strain; as did likewise Aunt Dorothée, who, however, suggested a wet

towel round one's head as a beneficent adjunct to the walk. So Horace was shortly clearing the road to Meudon.

That evening M. Pochemolle, on rising from table, remarked that it was a long time since he had seen his friend Bourbatruelle, late in the crockery way, now retired and owning a villa at Auteuil. Suppose they were to drive over and spend the evening with Bourbatruelle? Nothing loath to show off to Mdme. Bourbatruelle a brave watered silk gown resplendent with bugles, Mdme. Pochemolle consented; and so did M. Alcibiade, remembering that there was a Mdle. Bourbatruelle, mirthful and goodly to look upon. Georgette would have been happy to go, too, but being engaged in finishing a piece of tapestry, which she had promised the curé of Meudon against Easter to deck one of his altars with, thought she had better remain at home, so as not to risk delay with her work.

"As you please, child," said Mdme. Pochemolle, a little tartly, for ever since that unlucky rejection of the Prince of Arcola's suit, Mdme. Pochemolle's maternal heart had borne a load of bitterness. There are filial offences which a mother never quite forgives this side of the grave, and refusal of an eligible offer is one of them.

More affectionate in his tone and look, the worthy ex-drapier simply said, "Well, Georgette, we will take your love to the Bourbatruelles."

And so Georgette was left alone to finish her tapestry.

She went up stairs and sat down by the open window of her room—one that was located in a corner of the house overlooking both the garden and part of the road-way skirting it. The evening was mild and fine. On the lawns of all the villas within view, Meudonites were sipping coffee or wreathing blue clouds of cigarette smoke into the thin air, whilst their offspring crowded over gravel pies laboriously constructed, or gambolled with their little close-cropped French heads in and out of lilac-bushes. It was also a pleasant sight to see such Meudonites as had been for a stroll into the fields trudging homewards in groups down the hedge-lined roads, laden with rustic spoils, a little footsore, but contented and hungering for their *pot-au-feu*. Papa to the front, with straw hat in one hand, and prickly branch of scented may in the other; mamma, a little behind, with more may and cowslips; hopefuls closing the procession; small girl with bunches of limp daisies and buttercups, much the worse for being plucked; small boy holding a dead dormouse by the tail, slain in single combat. Then there were

red-breeched soldiers, who enlivened the road, trampling along fast, to be back in barracks in time for tattoo: a desultory knife-grinder pushing his vehicle towards Paris, and whistling *le Sieur de Framboisy* as loudly as though that melody were not interdicted by the police, for its disrespectful allusions to his Majesty; and presently came the sounds of a hurdy-gurdy, and of a voice singing sweetly an old and popular ballad to its accompaniment.

Georgette listened. It was a woman's voice; and she sang with that plaintive sadness which the instrument she was playing requires. But she seemed to be returning home after a toilsome day, for trudging slowly, she stopped no longer before any one house than the time to repeat a single verse of her song, and then proceeded, her hurdy-gurdy droning mournfully, almost weirdly, in the mean time. In this way she reached the Pochemolle villa, and would have passed on, but, looking up, perceived Georgette at her window, and so paused in the road. Turning the handle of her instrument in measured cadence, and drawing notes so low, tender, and melancholy, that they were like the strains of a young girl's dirge, she sang this:—

"Pour chasser de sa souvenance,
L'ami secret,
On se donne tant de souffrance,
Pour peu d'effet;
Une si douce fantaisie
Toujours revient;
Lorsqu'on songe qu'il faut qu'on l'oublie,
On s'en souvient."

Georgette dropped her needle. There was not a word in these lines so true to nature, but might have been penned for her special case. How often had she not tried to forget Horace, and how often had not some *douce fantaisie* returned to keep his image ever present in her memory! She threw out some money to the woman, who called on the Virgin to bless her, and then she would have resumed her work, but the hands, unguided by the mind, which was just then straying far from gold and silver thread patterns, rested on the tambour-frame without moving. Of whom was she thinking? Of whom *do* women think? Of the men who love them most? Seldom. Of the men who have caused them most suffering, and whom they love the more for that reason. Georgette thought—and this was not the first time that month, that week, nor even that day—of the last time when she had seen Horace, of that short, cruel interview, when she had reviled him, and he had insulted her. But she did not think with anger, or resentment, of that scene; on the contrary, Horace had cleared

himself by his violent indignation. In hurling back upon her without restraint, without pity, the accusations she had launched against him, he had proved his innocence in her eyes more signally than if he had adduced innumerable arguments and circumstantial proofs. She blessed that passionate outburst which had restored again to his place in her esteem the man she loved; for the insults he had heaped upon her bore no grudge. Like a penitent kissing the rod that has lashed her, she murmured that she deserved them. But she felt contrite—bitterly, unspeakably contrite—for her unfounded suspicions against him. These she magnified into crimes, and would have done penance for on bended knees. A loving woman's heart is an unfathomable abyss of humility.

"That he should love another, what more natural, since my own heart and temper are so wicked," was her meek self-confession. And then she accused herself for ever having hoped to be loved by a man who was above her in every thing—in mind and soul as well as worldly rank—accused herself for having mentally despised Angélique, who was gentler and purer than she—accused herself for dreaming still about Horace, who ought to be sacred to her as if he were dead. Yet, underlying these repentant self-denunciations, was a heart-felt, though scarcely defined wish to see Horace, if but once more to ask his forgiveness for having wronged him. She deluded herself into fancying that this expiation was a duty; she knew it would be a relief. So these two, Horace and Georgette, were both tending towards the same point; they desired to meet and ask each other's pardons.

For several minutes after the minstrel-woman had disappeared—her touching notes lingering behind her like the trail that follows light—Georgette sat, full of emotion, applying the words she had just heard to herself, and thrilling at the echoes of them that vibrated in her heart. At last—it may have been after ten minutes, perhaps after twenty—she looked up from a particular flower in her embroidery, to which her gaze seemed riveted, and glanced into the garden. On the gravel path below her window stood a man, and that man was Horace.

He looked so sepulchral in his dark clothes—his black gloves and his face beaming paler from the dusk—that she started, and pressed her hand to her side as if she had seen an apparition.

"Mademoiselle," he said, with bated voice and in an appealing tone, "can I speak to you—a single instant?"

She descended into the garden instinc-

tively, having no control over her own will in the matter. She wondered, when she got there, how and why she had come down.

"Thank you," he cried fervently; then with impassioned ardor, "O Georgette! can you ever forgive me for my brutality to you? I have come on purpose to crave your pardon—for no other purpose than this. Remorse has been devouring me for my heartless conduct."

Paler than himself, more troubled, and more faltering, she answered: "It is for me to beg your pardon, M. le Duc—Monsieur Horace," added she, correcting herself on seeing a disappointed look flit over his features. "What can you have thought of me? Believe me, I did not speak what I feel. I hate myself for what I said to you!" And her eyes brimmed with tears as she glanced up into his face.

He seized one of her hands, and pressed it to his lips.

"Hear me, Georgette," said he; "I love you, love you with all the might of my heart. Like a madman, I rushed into a marriage with a woman whom I did not really care for; I was blind as well as mad, for I did not see that it was you alone whom I loved. Let us not prolong our misunderstanding. Tell me that you love me. I have heard how you refused M. d'Arcola. Let me hear from your own lips that it was for my sake you did so." And, encircling her waist with his arm, he drew her to him, and lowered his face so close to hers that their lips almost touched.

She quivered from head to foot, struggled feebly, and then closed her eyes, as if to shut out the sun's rays.

"Yes, yes, I love you!" she sobbed deliriously. "I have loved you always, you know it."

This time their lips met. He covered her face, eyes, hands, with burning kisses; and her head drooped languidly, unresistingly, on his shoulder.

"We have wasted enough happiness. Georgette," whispered Horace wildly. "You know that if I were free, I would make you my wife; but human laws and conventionalities must not stand in the way of our felicity. We are wedded in the sight of Heaven, for the only marriages that can be sanctioned above are those of hearts linked together by love."

He spoke with the fervid tenderness of passion; but his words seemed suddenly to revive Georgette. She tremblingly disengaged herself from his embrace, and with wistful looks and voice of entreaty, said: "O M. Horace! let us not mar this one hour of happiness in our lives. I shall remember it all my days as the sweetest I

have ever spent; but we can never be more to each other than we are. Never, never!"

"But, hear me, Georgette," he exclaimed, trying to retake her hand.

"No, no;" and she sank on a form, burying her face in her hands. "We are both bound by duties—you to your wife, whom it would be cruelty to betray; I to—to"—Her sobs choked her. "I wanted to say, that I, too, am engaged—or nearly."

"You engaged?" cried Horace, starting back, colorless.

She did not immediately answer. Her tears were raining fast, and her frame shook with agitation.

"Do not judge me wrongly again," sobbed she at last. "You see, after I made you those—those wicked reproaches at our last meeting, accusing you of having married for money, and when you answered me that I, too, had jilted an honest man who loved me—that M. Filoselle—I thought that all you said was right; and I have been reflecting ever since that perhaps M. Filoselle imagined I had refused him for bad motives." She sighed sorrowfully. "And I would not have him think this," added she, shaking her head, "for such thoughts sour one's heart and make it unjust to others. You cannot conceive how perverse and uncharitable I was when I allowed myself to suspect ill of you. So, as poor M. Filoselle has been sending me letters for this last month by my brother, and as I see that he has been really expecting all along that I would marry him, and says that the happiness of his life depends upon it, I told my brother to answer him to-day, that I would keep the word my father once gave, and become his wife."

A few more tears coursed each other down her cheeks, and her hand shook as she wiped them away.

"Good heavens! you married to that ludicrous counter-jumper!" exclaimed Horace, frenzied. "Why, I would a million times sooner see you wedded to the Prince of Arcola!"

"If I were to marry the Prince, and pretend to love him when I did not, I should feel as if I had sold myself to him," murmured Georgette, reddening. "I can pretend to love M. Filoselle, because I have nothing to gain by this marriage but the consciousness of doing right, by making a man who loves and suits me happy."

"But have you no pity on me?" broke out Horace, distractedly; "must this poem of our love be cut short at the first verse? Do you not see that you are condemning me to a whole life of unhappiness; and have I, who both love and trust and adore you, no greater claim to your compassion than this man, Filoselle?" He took her

hands beseechingly, and poured out a new torrent of vows and adjurations: "Georgette, Georgette! are you going to let this love rankle within me, all my days through, unchafed?"

She hesitated; then rose, and with the light of innocence beaming from her eyes, and her hand laid tremblingly on her lover's arm, whispered: "Horace, our love would rankle within us if we had ever cause to blush for it. But let us make of it something pure and sacred, enshrine it in our hearts as a second conscience to stimulate us to good and noble deeds, to kindly thoughts, to generous acts of self-sacrifice. We shall be distant from one another, we may not meet again; but let us each feel that the other's silent love is with him to sustain and encourage in all the trials with which life is crossed. Then will these trials seem lighter. Wherever you may be, whatever you do, my heart will follow you, throbbing for all your pains, exulting at your triumphs. I have heard, though only lately, of your father's chivalrous honor and your own in spurning an estate which you could not accept with consistency; and if you knew how much I worshipped and admired you for this act! We women, you know, will always have our lovers heroes; and spotless honor, honor which knows no compromise nor weakness, is the highest form of heroism we conceive. For myself, there is no sorrow or pang that will seem hard to me to bear, now that I have your love. And after all, this sacrifice we are embracing will not last long. What are the few years of human life in comparison with eternity? For beyond this, there must assuredly be a world where those who have suffered here have their time of joy; and there, Horace, there, if we keep stainless in this life, we may meet never to be parted again."

She uttered these words in a quick tone, with almost inspired serenity on her face, and when she had concluded she raised herself, kissed him chastely on the forehead, and said, "God bless you, and good-by."

"Georgette, stay," he exclaimed in despair, darting forward to hold her back.

But she turned with a look so loving yet so full of maidenly dignity and reliance on his honor, that he remained rooted where he stood. Before crossing the threshold of the house she turned once more and waved him a last kiss with her hand, glanced to him a last good-by with her eyes. Then it was as if all light had suddenly vanished from his presence.

He was roused by the noise of wheels, caused by the Pochemolle family returning from their excursion. Night had completely set in. He snatched up his hat

from a form, and as soon as the house-door had closed upon the draper, his wife, and son, and the cab had rolled away, let himself out with his stolen latch-key, which he then threw over the gate on to the gravel path, in order that it might be found again by its owner. He would never need it again, that he knew.

Then he walked toward Paris with dejected gait and a heavy weight at his heart. He despised himself; yet, man-like, endeavored to shift some of the responsibility of his own abasement on to other and unoffending shoulders: "If I had married this girl," brooded he, "I should have been a different man. Curse my marriage, curse it!"

Whilst Horace was thus madly laying a ban on his own roof-tree, this is what was passing under it. After Horace had sallied out on his supposed stroll to cure his fanciful headache, M. Macrobe had very soon retired to go to a party, and left Angélique to the improving society of Aunt Dorothee and the Crimean Hero. The financier, by the by, had become very assiduous during the last three weeks in frequenting parties, and this with the object of letting everybody who still lingered in town hear that he was going to spend his summer at Clairefontaine, and that Clairefontaine was an estate worth *two* million francs a year (a little exaggeration does no harm). He was not mistaken in supposing that these recitals would operate beneficially on Crédit Parisien stock. The shareholding mind, with its habitual sagacity, opined that if the chairman admitted his son-in-law's income to be two million francs, four millions must be accounted as nearer the true mark: for did not these functionaries systematically understate their private worth? Whence it followed, as clear as a proposition in Euclid, that M. de Hautbourg having four millions a year in no way connected with the Crédit Parisien, it behooved every shareholder of that Company to sleep in peace, and rest assured that fifteen per cent was the stablest of institutions. But M. Macrobe did not merely succeed in dazzling the shareholder, which would have been a poor triumph. Wherever he turned, Society's smiles met him. There were not many members of the *haute fashion*, as French sporting papers call it, still in Paris; but such few as there were smiled as bountifully between them as though their numbers had been quintuple; and at one house where a "liquidation" rout was being given (i.e., an *omnium gatherum* of all the visiting list overlooked in previous invitations during the season), M. Gribaud, who had dropped in to talk with the master of the house,

one of his colleagues, took an early and easy opportunity of sidling up to the financier, and striking up a sort of truce with him.

"So you have reached the goal of your hopes, M. Macrobe?" said he, with the grim bluntness of an unfriendly bear.

"Not quite, your Excellency, but nearly."

"And I see you have come forward to contest the second seat in the Hautbourg department. If you win it you will be calling yourself a Liberal, and voting with the Opposition?"

"Heaven forbid! I shall ever be a Macrobist, and vote for Macrobe!"

M. Gribaud was pleased to grin.

"Well, you know, we have given orders to our people to remain neutral between Duke and Prince. We hinted to the latter that he would do well to retire, but he declined. He seems bitter against you, and is fighting you on his own hook."

"He is like his grandfather the field-marshal, who feared not treble odds, and took his thrashings gallantly," replied the financier, with smooth sarcasm. "And I, your Excellency, am I to be opposed?"

"Give us a pledge, Macrobe, give us a pledge," growled the Minister, button-holding the other, and drawing him into a corner. "What the devil can possess a man like you to make war on us? Why, you might be a minister yourself, if you were our ally."

"My address is Bonapartist from the exordium to the peroration, your Excellency. It concludes with the cry, '*Vive l'Empereur*.'"

"Ay, but there is not a word about '*Vive Gribaud*,'" grumbled his Excellency, wagging his head with distrust.

"That was a terrific shaking you gave the Crédit Parisien," laughed the financier, rather sourly.

"Bygones are bygones, Macrobe," grumbled the other, though a little shamefacedly. "I serve the state. It was not our interest to see you and your son-in-law become powers; but now that you are likely to become so whether you will it or not, our interest is to be friends with you. Statemanship is all summed up in that. It's sail with the wind."

"I have little fear about my election," said the financier with an air of half-mocking assurance, for which his Excellency would have cheerfully buffeted his weasly head. "But if my competitor is not supported, and if your Excellency will speak a good word or two for the Crédit Parisien in the same quarters where you have been whispering evil, your Excellency's name goes into the second edition of my address

with a laudatory notice attached to it. My conditions are not hard," added the financier, his voice beginning to grate; "for whatever you may say or do, you can never repair the mischief you have done the *Crédit Parisien*. From the day when you drove all its official wire-pullers from it, its hours were numbered, but if you instruct the Government organs who have been abusing it by your desire to change their tune, and if you let it alone yourself, it may run on for another year or two; and this will enable me to retire from it before the crash, which is all I want."

"Well, well, I like a plain bargain: I let the *Crédit Parisien* alone and you let me alone, eh?" and M. Gribaud holding out his hand gripped the financier's fingers between its knotty joints like filberts between a nut-cracker.

So the peace seemed signed; and M. Macrobe gaddled about night after night, from drawing-room to drawing-room, holding his head aloft, and evincing all the good-humor of success. But we must return to Angélique.

Left alone with her aunt and her cousin after her father had gone out, she thankfully assented to the Captain's offer to read to her, and composed herself on the sofa to work—or rather to play mechanically with colored wools—and to listen to him, or feign to do so. Reading, however, was but an amatory device of the gallant officer's. He read until he had sent Aunt Dorothee to sleep, which was never long; then he would lay down his book and talk confidentially and tenderly about himself by the hour—the only method he knew of making love. Captain Clarimon was of opinion that the French Army was to regenerate the whole civilized world by thrashing it—every nation taking its turn—the Russians had just had theirs; next would come the English, who had been wanting a thrashing for some time; then Austria and the Prussians, and lastly those miserable Spaniards and Swedes. He developed these views with no lack of fire, and was especially descriptive as to the parts he himself would take in the double work of civilizing and discomfiting, basing his predictions as to the future on his entirely satisfactory achievements in the past. Angélique always listened kindly, though sometimes venturing on some such simple question as whether it would not be possible to civilize some of the nations without thrashing them; but the Captain complained to himself that there was an absence of glow in her enthusiasm, none of that rapture, none of those effusive transports which the novels he had read had led him to believe were usual with fair women hearken-

ing to the deeds of heroes. To speak in military phrase, the brave warrior had been laying siege to his cousin for some time, and he found that the fortress was a little long in capitulating. This was so much the case that on the particular evening in question, having kept up a close bombardment for two hours, and having finally awaked Aunt Dorothee with a start by his *furor* in picturing for about the fifty-sixth time how those *pauvres diables d'Anglais* would all have been stewed at Inkermann if he and his men had not delivered them from the frying-pan, he retreated disheartened as he had done on many former occasions, and went out to solace himself with a night walk and a cigar on the Boulevards. Then Angélique, a little wearied by this sanguino-civilizing talk, laid aside her balls of red and yellow worsted, and closed her eyes as if for a nap.

"That young man's conversation is most terrifying and makes one's flesh creep," exclaimed Aunt Dorothee lugubriously. "My dear, it's ten o'clock and your husband is not in yet. He will make his headache worse instead of better, by walking so long."

"He will be in soon, I dare say, dear aunt," said Angélique, patiently. She, too, had noticed how long her husband remained absent; but she was used to it now.

"My dear, you are getting sleepy. That all comes of the late hours we kept before we went into mourning," resumed Aunt Dorothee, with conviction; "which mourning—Heaven forgive me for saying so!—is almost a mercy, for how people could remain out night upon night as we did, and not get into their beds until three or four in the morning, and sometimes not until the milkman had come, is more than I can understand in a Christian land. You must lie down and sleep, my dear. I won't speak."

Angélique faintly combated the impeachment of being sleepy, but, as the twinkling of her eyes belied her, she was soon fain to give in, and let her head sink back into the cushions. In less than five minutes more her regular breathing told that she was asleep.

And in that short sleep she dreamed—dreamed that she was in a lonely spot amidst trees, whose branches were tossed about by the wind, whilst deluges of rain fell around her from a dark, thundering sky. Seeking for shelter, she came to an oak, whose spreading canopy of foliage seemed to offer her protection, and there crouched. But at that moment some of the mist and rain before her cleared away like a curtain, and disclosed two figures walking hand-in-hand. They were the figures that were constantly

in her thoughts day and night — her husband's and Georgette's. She could see them distinctly, as if they were but a few yards off, and they were walking slowly; but there was this difference between their position and hers, that, whereas the storm raged in all its black fury above where she was standing, Horace and Georgette appeared to be in the sunshine, in a garden full of flowers and songs of birds. They looked lovingly into each other's eyes, stopped and kissed each other — then parted. And Horace, hurrying quickly away, came towards her under the oak. And she would have fled, but her limbs refused to move: she was petrified, and could not even utter a cry. He came rapidly and straight in her direction, but apparently without seeing her, for not until he almost touched her did he pause. Then the love that still gleamed on his face changed suddenly to anger and menace. He raised his hand and cursed her!

She started from her sleep, and sat upright with blanched face and starting eyes. "Aunt, where is he? Did you hear what he said?" she asked, wildly.

"What, dear?" answered Aunt Dorothee, frightened and rising.

Angelique looked round her with horror-stricken gaze, as if the image she had just seen was still present to her there in the room.

"Oh! pity, pity," she cried at last, putting her hands before her eyes to avert the light. "What a dream — what a frightful dream!"

Aunt Dorothee, in alarm, pressed to her, and endeavored to comfort her. "You are agitated, child. It's those long walks this winter. I knew they could only do harm."

"It is over now, dear aunt," pleaded she, faintly and shivering. "It was only a dream" — but at her aunt's urgent request, she agreed to go to bed.

In her affrighted start from her dream, however, she had upset one of the sofa cushions on to the floor. She picked it up, but, in restoring it to its place, and settling it with the others, she noticed an edge of white paper peeping out of the cavity, formed by the tight drawing of the satin covering of the sofa at one of its corners. Thinking it was a letter she herself had dropped, she drew it from its nook. As fate would have it, it was the letter written to the financier with respect to Horace's doings, by M. Louchard, three weeks before, and which had lain there ever since it had fallen out of M. Macrobe's hand — a mute witness to the careful way in which drawing-room furniture is dusted in great houses by well-paid servants.

The letter had no envelope. She opened it and read: —

"SIR, — M. le Duc de Hautbourg has been followed, and it seems that he has been in the habit of going to Meudon to see Mlle. Georgette Pochemolle every morning for this past fortnight. He went there yesterday early, breakfasted at the restaurant with his mistress's brother, and returned again in the evening. He then admitted himself with a latch-key into the grounds, and remained there more than two hours. His visits are matters of public notoriety at Meudon.

"MOISE LOUCHARD."

What passed within Angelique as she read this, none but God and herself ever knew. But the look of silent, agonizing, deadly woe and resignation that impressed itself on her face, would have moved a heart of stone. Aunt Dorothee, seeing her stand lifeless as a statue exclaimed, "Gracious mercy, my dear, what is the matter with you? Your face has completely changed this minute. Speak, dear, you frighten me."

And Angelique spoke: —

"It was not a dream, aunt dear," she said plaintively.

CHAPTER XLI.

IN EXCELSIS.

NOR since that day of glory, when the mighty Count Alaric had ridden triumphantly into his good town, after routing his excellent king in the field adjoining it, had the borough of Hautbourg been thrown into such a state of commotion as that caused by the announcement that Clairefontaine Castle was to be opened again, and that the new lord thereof was coming to reside there. The oldest inhabitants affirmed that the return of the first Duke after Waterloo and the Restoration was nothing beside it; and that the solemn visit paid to the Castle by King Charles X. and Court was a paltry event in comparison. These were great concessions for the civic Nestors to make, for the depreciation of the past is not a common foible with those who are leaning towards three-score and ten. But then, it should be said, that the admission was, so to speak, imposed upon the Nestors by the imperious voice of public opinion, which would have flouted and scorned and held up to ignominy any individual so abandoned as to hint that the return of the young Duke to his ancestral towers, and the consequent flow of custom

that would accrue to Hautbourg tills, was not the most important episode in the modern annals of France.

All our old friends of the "Hôtel de Clairefontaine" *table d'hôte* were to the front in their jubilations. M. Ballanchu, the seedsman, in a new velvet coat, for had he not been sent for by M. Claude the agent to furnish seeds to the Clairefontaine gardeners for all their flower-beds? M. Scarpin, the bootmaker, who had taken the measures for five grooms, three footmen, two cooks, and the gamekeepers—all lately engaged at the Castle, and who saw boundless avenues of future boots unwind themselves before his imagination. M. Hochepain, the tax-gatherer, who would now resume the quarterly calls he used to make at the Castle, and with them the quarterly dinners in the butler's room that were wont to solemnize these occasions; and Farmers Toulmouche, Truchepoule, and Follavoine, who were not contented about their crops, and wanted improvements on their farms, and thought their rents ought to be lowered, and hoped to set all these points right out of the new Duke's pocket.

As for M. Filoselle, who ran down for a day or two, and with an eye to business, during the ferment of excitement, he was received with cordiality, and a generous forgiveness for past errors; but M. Ballanchu called upon him complacently to remember how thoroughly all his—M. Ballanchu's—predictions had been justified by the event, and how egregiously he, M. Filoselle, had strayed in his prophesying.

"Do you recollect that discussion we had, M. Filoselle, when you attacked the Clairefontaine family, and I defended them? You said that the Hautbourgs would never come back among us, and I offered you to bet all my fortune that they would—knowing them, as I did, to be true noblemen."

"You did, you did," rejoined M. Filoselle, at first surprised, but then laughing, "and I remember I took the bet. It was ten sous. Here they are."

"I would never listen to any calumnies that were uttered against the Dukes of Hautbourg," exclaimed M. Scarpin, with determination.

"Noa," echoed Farmers Toulmouche and Truchepoule, with their mouths full.

"Twarn't likely," continued Farmer Follavoine, licking some sauce off his fingers.

"Was I the only one, though, at the table who fell foul of the Duke?" asked M. Filoselle, amused. "I fancied I had some supporters round the board."

All eyes became intent upon their plates; then, the pause being awkward, rose and converged, with touching unanimity, to-

wards M. Hochepain, who, being deaf, was not in a position to defend himself.

"So you and I minced the same meat, did we, M. Hochepain?" cried the traveller across the table.

M. Hochepain caught the words "mince meat."

"Yes," said he, "it's not bad, but ought to be served with poached eggs and a bit of lemon."

"Allow me to send you some more of this goose, M. de Filoselle," exclaimed M. Duval, the host, blandly. He had not forgotten the wordy tournament between M. Filoselle and M. Ballanchu three years before, nor the fears he had entertained lest the peace and some of his plates should be broken. He was anxious to avoid a repetition.

"No goose ever appealed to me in vain, M. Duval. Madelon, my child, here is my plate. I expected to find you in the possession of a husband, Madelon, and hold the gallantry of Hautbourg cheap, since I see you still a spinster."

"As if I wanted husbands!" exclaimed Mdle. Madelon, pertly.

"Not many husbands, child, but one," suggested the traveller.

"I drink to the health of Monseigneur le Duc de Hautbourg," cried M. Ballanchu, as the sweets appeared on the table, and he filled his glass to the brim, undiluted.

"Stay," interposed M. Filoselle. "M. Duval, these gentlemen will allow me to offer them some champagne in which to drink this auspicious toast. Some of Mdme. Clicquot's vintage, if you have it."

The wine was fetched, the corks popped, the long glasses foamed, and M. Filoselle, on his legs, amidst convivial rapping of knives, said: "Gentlemen, I second the toast of M. Ballanchu. This is to the health of M. le Duc de Hautbourg, and God bless him! Gentlemen, I have the honor to inform you that I hope soon to be married (sensation), and my happiness on this occasion I shall owe greatly to the distinguished and amiable nobleman who is about to return to his estates, to scatter prosperity amongst you all. It is not using a liberty to term him my friend, gentlemen, for we have lived under the same roof. (Renewed sensation.) I have had the honor of grasping his hand (stupefaction), and he deigned to plead my cause with the very tortuous-minded person whom I hope soon to call my mother-in-law (prolonged marks of astonishment). But this is not all, gentlemen. In the course of business, I lately did myself the pleasure of forwarding to M. le Duc de Hautbourg a list of current prices of my employers, the MM. Campèche, wine-merchants, 367, Rue Lafite, second

house from the corner, and the answer I received was equally flattering and mag-nanimous — being an order for twelve dozen bottles of Burgundy, and with it a cheque for the amount — one thousand four hundred and forty francs — not a centime less. (Emotion.) Messieurs, I contend that the nobleman who, whilst aiding the projects of true love, thus furthers the development of commerce — giving his orders on a liberal scale, cash down, and without asking questions, is — is all that can be said on the subject. (Loud and continued cheering — enthusiasm.) Gentlemen, I have but a word to add before finishing this after-dinner speech, which the Greek poet Virgil said ought to be short and sweet, like a burned almond. Last year, at the Paris elections, I voted for M. de Hautbourg — coming from Marseilles in the 7.55 mail express for the special purpose, and this year I look to your all following my example, in despite of prefects, curés, and all other functionaries, whom I respect when they are of my own way of thinking, but do not value that" (M. Filoselle courageously snapped his fingers) "when it is otherwise. Gentlemen, here is my toast: Long live the ex-Member for Paris! Long live the new Member for Hautbourg!"

M. Filoselle sat down amidst obstreperous rattling of knives, and energetic shouts of "Long live the Member for Hautbourg!"

-M. Hohepain bawling the loudest, though he bawled wrong, saying, "Long live the Mayor and the Municipal Council!" under the impression that it was these civic dignitaries who were being toasted. Farmers Toulmouche, Truchepoule, and Follavoine, having never before drank champagne, gulped theirs down the wrong way, and then sneezed in unison — a touching sight. M. Ballanchu mopped his brow with his napkin, and then stoutly bellowed, "Vote for M. le Duc? Of course we will. I should like to know who wouldn't? I'd call him a cur."

"Quite right — never stick at trifles," responded M. Filoselle. "But, by the by, you've not forgotten that M. de Hautbourg is a sort of Radical, have you?" and he grinned with good-natured malice at the seedsman. "Unless my memory fails me, you have set your face against 'those vermin.'"

"What, I?" exclaimed M. Ballanchu, in the voice of one crying: "Just Heavens! was there ever so foul a charge?" "Why, I have been a Radical ever since — ever since, I don't know how long; and so are we all Radicals at this table — every man jack of us, except Hohepain here," added he, adroitly. "It must have been he who told you that."

And the entire table, except the Hohepain afore-named, protested with one accord, "Yes, yes, it must have been Hohepain."

But it was not only at the table-d'hôte of the "Hôtel de Clairefontaine" that the resolution to vote for the Duke of Hautbourg was included in the programme of arrangements destined to celebrate his return. Everywhere the Hautbourgian conscience became penetrated with the sudden force of liberal principles; and the Prince of Arcola, who, on first coming down, had found the borough not indisposed against him, had, on the third or fourth day, seen the wind veer round completely. Nor was the prefect more fortunate. The private instructions given to this gentleman were enigmatical; and, to a less expert functionary, might have seemed distressing. He was not to oppose the Duke of Hautbourg, and he was not to let him get through, if he could help it; which means, that outwardly his demeanor was to be smiles and honey; but that inwardly his soul was free to brew crafty rumors, which the trusty agents of the prefecture would disseminate perfidiously on village swards, and in borough market-places, to undermine the candidature, if possible. To make matters worse, these instructions came late. The prefect was in the heat of battle when he got them. Already had the four hundred mayors of the department been drilled and equipped for the fray; already had the four hundred vicars been put through their political catechism, reprovéd, exhorted, and taught the way they should go; already had justices of the peace, commissaries of police, and rural guards been told in no devious language wherein — and wherein alone — their hopes of promotion lay; and already had the prefectural organ, unique journal of Hautbourg, fired volley upon volley of leading articles very heavy to read, but effective nevertheless, as heavy shot is. It was rather hard that all this labor should have been in vain. Rather hard to disband the mayors, to unlecture the vicars, to enjoin the justices of the peace, policemen, and others to remain religiously neutral; and to make the furious artillery of the prefectural organ vomit pretty sugar-plums instead of bomb-shells. Still, all this had to be done. When M. Gribaud requested one of his prefects to swallow a leek, that prefect swallowed the leek, and made no bones about it.

So Church and State, the governing and the governed, all seemed in league to make things pleasant for the Lord of Clairefontaine. Carpenters began running up triumphal arches, painters to adorn them, drapers to deck, and gardeners to festoon

them. Lumbering wagons were seen groaning on the road to Clairefontaine under piles of new furniture, and the Hautbourg upholsterer, exalted by a cubit in his stature, communicated to all who would hear him, that it was he who had executed the order for these goods, none but he. Like stories told the grocer, the chinaman, and the candlestick-maker, whose merchandise was finding its way to the Castle in bales; and the butcher and baker smiled, foreseeing that their turn would come presently. Then the clergy and the mayoralty laid their heads together to plan whether the two should amalgamate in receiving Monsieur le Duc, or each give him a separate reception. And hereupon a tremendous question of etiquette arose as to whether the mayoralty should receive M. le Duc in official capacity, i.e. clothed in its insignia of office, or merge its welcome within that of the multitude. The point was deemed so important that the united wits of the prefect, his whole council of prefecture, and two sub-prefects, declared themselves unable to solve it, and it was referred to the Ministry, who in doubt submitted it to the Tuileries, and the Tuileries, always full of tact, decided, that as the return of the lord of Clairefontaine was an event with which his Majesty could not but sympathize, the authorities should receive M. le Duc in state; nay more, that as the crowd would probably be great, and, perhaps, importunately affectionate, the ducal carriages should have a brigade of mounted gendarmes to escort them from the station to the Castle. Here was honor with a vengeance, though, to be sure, there were some who hinted that as the duke's entry had been fixed to take place on the very day of the Hautbourg election, the gendarmes might be intended quite as much to overawe the population from uttering seditious shouts against his Majesty, as to swell the triumph of his Grace.

Whatever may have been the opinions of the prefect on this head, he kept them to himself; but about this time a really transcendent expedient for satisfying everybody, Tuileries, ministry, affectionate population, and his own self, occurred to his great mind. It was obviously quite unsafe and useless to spread defamatory rumors against the duke—unsafe because these rumors might be traced to their source, and useless because the affectionate population could no longer be brought to believe them. But there was a way of making the very enthusiasm of the electoral mind act as a lever for overturning the duke's election, as who should say steam set to explode the engine it is propelling. The prefectural agents—generally much esteemed and un-

suspected members of municipal councils—began to be lyrical and gushing about the bright young Seigneur who was coming back to his home. Only, they sighed and muttered what a pity it was he should be wanting to get into the Chamber again, for if returned, he would certainly live three-fourths of the year at Paris, whereas, in the contrary case, they would enjoy the inestimable benefit of his society all the year round. The prefectural organ scored the music to these laments, and came out diurnally with little insidious notes, such as, "M. le Duc, who is returning amongst us for a few short weeks." "M. le Duc, who will henceforth be with us at least a month or so every year." "M. le Duc, who will soon be absorbed again in the vortex of politics," &c., &c. These were good tactics. They allowed the prefect to turn the enemy's flank, to work havoc, and to sow confusion without appearing to do it. There was no elector, however opaque, but took in this maxim: If the duke is at Paris he can't be here, too. Several faces began insensibly to lengthen; sundry brows to brood; the election grew to be a less popular subject of conversation than it had been before. But nobody said any thing. It was one of those under-water commotions that perform their ravages at a silent depth below the surface. Somehow, though, an observer might have fancied that people glanced often and pensively at M. Hochepain the tax-gatherer; as though, under certain contingencies not as yet definable, that personage might be turned to practical account. It would always be feasible to say, "I protest and vow that I voted for M. le Duc. It must have been Hochepain who did all the mischief."

At last the great day dawned.

Dawned with golden sunshine, speckless blue sky, and pealing of bells, as if for a marriage feast. Hautbourg fluttered all over in bunting from its nethermost street to its uppermost. The "Hôtel de Clairefontaine" seemed one mighty laurel-bush blossoming with flags. The statue of the Count Alaric had a crown of bays set conspicuously on its head; and the museum of stuffed birds—pride of the department—had displayed a white eagle with a scroll between its claws:—

Au Fils de ses bienfaiteurs
La Ville de Hautbourg
Souhaite Bienvenue.

On the pavements thronged densely, expectantly, solemnly, and palpitatingly, more suits of Sunday best than had ever been seen gathered together in one spot within that borough, on the same day. Peasants from the villages in indigo blouses, and

with scarlet umbrellas under their arms; peasant women with white cone-caps towering sprucely out of sight, smart kerchiefs pinned cross-wise on their bosoms, golden crosses pendent from black velvet ribbons round their throats. Every window was ablaze with new bonnet-strings; every door-way had its cluster of sight-seers holding on anyhow, as it pleased Heaven, by the lintels, by the backs of chairs placed so that those behind might see over the heads of those to the fore, by the shop-fronts. Now and then a wag would cry: "Here they come;" and there would be a rocking forward, a headlong heave, and some well-laden chairs, taken unawares, would crash down supine, they and their cargoes. Upon which general merriment: people are easily exhilarated in such moments. Suddenly a shout, a long murmur, and then suppressed excitement as three splendid barouches, each drawn by four horses, and flashing with fresh paint, armorial scutcheons, and purple and gold liveries of positions and outriders sweep, at a stately trot down the main street from the castle on their way to the station. Horace had left his agent to manage matters, and the agent, directed by M. Macrobe, had managed them royally. Almost immediately, new murmur, and then imposing apparition of the Mayor and Municipal Council: the former in a new hat, and with a tri-colored scarf round his girth; the latter treading on each other's heels, clean shaved, shy at being looked at, but impressed with the gravity of the situation, and prepared, like Roman senators, to do their duty to the last. Then, triumphant march in lonely glory of Monsieur the sub-Prefect of Hautbourg, majestic in a silver-spangled swallowtail, a cocked-hat too big for him, and white gloves, which he cracks as he strides in trying to get into them. Next, the local clergy in cassocks, not chasubles, but headed by an archdeacon great at controversy, gaunt-eyed, and evidently pregnant of a speech. Lastly, the gendarmes, yellow-belted, pipe-clayed, prancing, and much admired by the cone-capped peasant-women. Then a lull. The tower-clock of Ste. Brigitte's chimes musically the three-quarters past something. It is the hour. A moment more, and the piercing whistle of the express is heard in the distance.

Then — but why describe such a sight, or how describe it? How phonograph delirium on to paper? Again and again, peal upon peal, round upon round, rose the cheers, the shouts of welcome, the benedictions. Down fell the nosegays in showers, thick, fragrant, pitiless, everywhere, on the horse's heads, under their feet, in the carriages, on the laps of the

carriages' occupants, covering hoods, seats, spatterdashies, with white, red, pink, and lilac petals. Handkerchiefs, banners, ~~and~~ waved, flapped, tossed to and fro as if blown by a gale. The gendarmes, clearing the way, ploughed slowly through a mass of outstretched hands, uplifted children, agitated hats, like fishing-smacks steering their keels through a surf; and above this astounding din, this frantic tumult of a city in a fever, rose the riot of the belfries and the crashing strains of brass bands drawn up under the triumphal arches.

Horace moved his hat off and on, very pale, and bowed without respite during three miles. He was startled and dazzled, but if ever man felt himself master of a town and king of it thenceforth, assuredly that man was he. And his heart beat fast, and his temples throbbed as he thought that this ovation was but the prelude to others, the first step in a long vista of power and fame then opening before him. In the second barouche, M. Macrobe, by no means overcome, but beaming, smiled and bowed to the crowd as General Monk may have done, to whom M. Gribaud had not inaptly compared him. But it was General Monk become Duke of Albemarle, knowing what was what, and saying within himself; — "All those cheers of yours, my friends, are of my manufacture — don't let's have any mistake about it." Beside the financier sat Aunt Dorothee, but the worthy lady could scarcely be compared to the Duke of Albemarle's sister, if that illustrious man possessed such a relative. Scared, in an utter state of collapse, and ready to cry, she whimpered her orisons beneath her breath, and dismally expected to meet the end of the world at the termination of all this. And ever and anon in her bewilderment she gazed stupefied at the bunting, reflecting that there was enough there to clothe ten villages; and at the purple vestments of the outriders, and the satin linings of the carriages, and at the prodigal waste of flowers, with disjointed thoughts as to what all these things must have cost. In the third vehicle was another scene. There the delighted Mr. Drydust, self-invited, beld forth to Jean Kerjou, come as special reporter to the "*Gazette des Boulevards*," to M. Gousset and to the Crimean Hero, about the marriage of his Pomeranian friend, Count Trinkgeld, of which the present festivities reminded him. The coming of age of his other friend, Lord Wildoats, had also been very remarkable. But he was inclined to award the palm to French solemnities of this kind. To begin with, they were rarer, and then the people shouted more, and weren't ashamed to shed

tears at the sight of one; "Which is what I like," said Mr. Drydust.

And so saluting and full of emotion, or radiant and quietly chuckling, or terrified and miserable, or agreeably anecdotal and loquacious, according to the mood and temper of its individual members, the cortège moved on its way: until the park-gates of Clairefontaine were passed, and all other feelings became immersed in one dominant, though voiceless, burst of admiration for the lordly castle, over whose towers the standard of the Hautbourgs was now waving for the first time after such a long period of mourning.

The tenantry were marshalled in respectful rows; on the marble staircase the dependents had arrayed themselves to do obeisance; and as the carriages stopped, the bare-headed steward stepped forward to assist the Duke and Duchess to alight, and said, "Welcome to Clairefontaine, Madame; welcome to your home, Monseigneur."

It was mellow evening before Angélique could withdraw from the feasting, and toasting, and speech-making, which, under the form of a breakfast to local magnates, officials, tenants and guests, took up the whole afternoon from mid-day till six. Then she contrived to glide out into the park with Aunt Dorothée, whilst a good many of the gentlemen sped Hautbourgwards to be present at the close of the poll, and bring back the result early.

She wanted to be alone, and to think.

With the letter she had found a day or two before pressing on her bosom like a cilice, with the memory of her short, frightful dream glaring before her eyes like a fixed vision, how wonder, that during the rejoicings of the morning, her own spirit should have been as heavy as that of one bereaved amidst a banquet?

Bereaved indeed! Bereaved of all that made life worth living for. Confidence, hope, the sense of being loved and of having a blessed part to perform in effecting the happiness of a loved heart.

All this was gone now. *All washed away by one black tide. Omnes fluctus tui et omnes gurgites tui super me transierunt.*

She had not had the thought of destroying the letter. She had kept it next her heart. Why, she scarcely knew. But there was a vague idea, a trust, that it might help her to take a resolution, and accomplish it. Early Christians going to martyrdom hung amulets about their necks to give them fortitude.

On the way through Hautbourg the women had been moved by the pale, young, and beautiful duchess, who smiled to them

so softly, yet with such wistful melancholy as she bowed. "She was a little dazed, poor thing," said they. And the men, not less compassionate, remarked, "It seemed to frighten her, poor lady."

Angélique was feeling all the way as if she was usurping the place she held, as if the cheers and welcomes she received were not hers. She entered Clairefontaine like a stranger. She had heard of those death's-heads put on the table at feasts. She was as one of these. What right had she to a place in her husband's castle, she who had no room in his heart?

"Where shall we go to, dear?" asked Aunt Dorothée. "Gracious mercy! it is a boon to be out in the fresh air alone again. How people can go through all we have this day, and not be struck ill in their beds is more than I know, my dear."

Angélique looked round and saw a sheet of water glancing under distant trees in the golden light of the setting sun.

"Let us go that way, aunt, dear," she murmured.

The lake was a broad and deep one, with a leafy island of willows in the middle, and an ornamental grotto or two dotting its margin. These grottoes had been used as boat-houses, or arbors in which to picnic in summer weather; but, deserted for years, they were now carpeted with velvet moss, and drops of crystal water fell like stalactites from their roofs.

To the largest of these grottoes went Angélique and her aunt. The evening was fairy-like, and the herds of red and fallow deer trooping away, affrighted at the approach of footsteps, lent an air of sylvan beauty to the noiseless scene. The grotto stood in a retired bend of the lake, and nature was so still around it, the water so profound, the foliage so dark and clustering, that Aunt Dorothée, a little awe-struck, whispered, "My dear, how death-like this is! It makes one think of graves."

"Let us go into the grotto," said Angélique.

This grotto had two chambers, one below and the other above. They were connected by a winding staircase of rocks and shells, and from the upper room, which, like the lower, had only three walls, the fourth side being open over the lake, a wide view of the surrounding park could be had. Both women stood gazing at the lake during a minute, and then Angélique, with a strange expression in her eyes, which her aunt called to mind later, suddenly kissed her, — once, twice, — silently.

"Aunt, dear, I am going to ascend the staircase to see the view," she then said.

"Oh, my dear, we shall never be able to get up those stairs!"

"No, don't you follow me, aunt; it will be too steep. I shall not be a minute."

And she began her ascent; but half-way she stopped, turned, and again looked at her aunt. There was that same strange look in her eyes, only deeper and moistened. She kissed her hand to the good woman who had been all her life as a mother to her, and the next instant was in the upper grotto.

Then she looked round. There was nobody in sight. The air was so still that the winnow-branches scarce touched the water with their green lips; the water was calm, deep, and clear; one could see the white bed of sand some twelve feet below the surface.

"It must be a gentle death," said Angélique, gazing at that white bed, — "like sleep."

Then she looked once more around her, and at the corners of the grotto, and below her feet at the slippery ledge overlooking the lake.

"It will free him," she murmured, "and I shall make him happy, which I could not do by living. But he must never know that it was done on purpose. They will think it was an accident, — that I slipped. I will scream as I fall."

She unfastened her dress, took out the letter, and threw it into the lake, with a little stone in it, so that it might sink.

"You will not punish me for this, Almighty God!" she said, dropping on her knees on the brink, and clasping her hands humbly; then, raising her hands aloft at the precise moment when the sun sunk out of sight, she uttered a wailing cry, and allowed herself to fall forward.

It was not till almost an hour afterwards that the crowd reached the spot — appalled, hurrying, bringing drags, ropes, and restoratives. Aunt Dorothee had at first fainted, and could not tell how long she had remained senseless, before strength returned to her to crawl away, and summon help; but when she reached the Castle she found it already dismayed. A startling piece of news had just been brought in by reluctant messengers. The new lord of Clairefon-

taine and his father-in-law had both missed their elections, and simultaneously a telegram from Paris had brought the news that M. Emile Gerold had been elected, in spite of himself, in the Tenth Circumscription of the Seine. The Duke had made no remark, but he had bit his lips, and turned ashy white. As for Monseigneur's father-in-law, he looked like to have a stroke of apoplexy.

This is what the servants were whispering to one another in the quadrangle of the Castle when Aunt Dorothee appeared amongst them, like a ghost, and shrieked, "Help! help! — my child — the Duchess — your mistress — has fallen into the lake!"

But the crowd might have spared itself its haste, its efforts, its well-meant ministrations; for when they drew the fair young body from the water, it had sunk into that last sleep from which no restoratives can revive us. A great circle was made, and every head was uncovered, as, whiter than a marble image in the moonlight, Angélique was laid on a hurdle-bier covered with soft branches.

"Poor child, poor child!" cried some. "She slipped off the grotto."

"Monseigneur," said a diver, reeking wet, and approaching Horace, who was holding his wife's head whilst the men were lifting the bier; "I found this paper close to the poor lady so to say, near her hand."

Horace unfolded the paper with trembling hand. It was M. Louchard's letter. Then those who watched him saw his knees shake and his body stagger forward heavily. He fell prostrate with his face to the earth, and his lips sealed on the hem of his wife's garment.

The great circle standing around respected this grief and remained motionless waiting till he should rise; but as his position did not change, somebody advanced and said: "Monseigneur," and laid a hand gently on his shoulder. Then he swayed a little to his left and rolled over by his wife's side, her hand falling softly on his in that motion, in silent token of forgiveness.

He was dead.

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